

# Aide-de-Camp's Library



सत्यमेव जयते

Rashtrapati Bhavan  
New Delhi

Accn No \_\_\_\_\_

Call No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10 ... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

Ne 7- 1146



# BROWN DANUBE





# BROWN DANUBE

by  
GORDON BAKER

THE NEWGATE PRESS  
LONDON, E.C.4

To  
MY MOTHER

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED, WOKING

## PREFACE

AUSTRIA "at peace" under the Nazi rule!

Diplomats and Statesmen have issued White Papers. Historians and Journalists have expressed their expert views. Doctors and Refugees have told their own harrowing tales.

This book does none of these things. It is just a story of everyday life, seen through ordinary English eyes, of the hopes and fears and trials of those people whom the world has always known and liked as Austrians.

GORDON BAKER.

WIENERWALD, 1938.

LONDON, 1941.



## CHAPTER I

*Though this be madness, yet there is method in it.*

HAMLET

THE air was heavy with the scent of syringa; I leant from the seat where I was sunning myself and broke off a small branch and sniffed it. The smell of the blossom reached my senses in concentrated form and I threw the flowers away irritably. Their rather voluptuous perfume reminded me of the East, and I did not want to be reminded of the East—of India, because India despite the lure of her exotic beauty, her history, her princes and her palaces, can be an unutterably dreary place to a lonely man spending his life shouting at countless coolies and gazing on a limitless horizon of tea-bushes. I did not want to be reminded that more than half my leave was over and that the time was drawing horribly close when I would have to leave Clare. Clare was so much part of my life that the idea of leaving her under existing circumstances was a nightmare. It was a nightmare against which my healthy body revolted; I was getting even thinner than usual. It was a nightmare against which my healthy mind revolted even more, for when morbid thoughts and fits of melancholia threatened to smother me in a blanket of misery, I was apt to break out into such fits of ungovernable rage that I wondered sometimes if I were normal.

Normal? The train of thought moved idly, languidly, until like a lighted fuse which travels steadily towards an explosive it suddenly burst with such force in my brain that I sat up with a jerk and my fingers grew white from their pressure on the arm of the seat. Normal? Oh yes, I was normal all right! and my heart gave an odd thump of gratitude as my eyes travelled to several groups of figures not far away from where I was sitting. Some were ensconced in deck chairs, others were strolling slowly along the shady walks, and a few were sitting on the terrace of a large white house, glimpses of which could be caught through the trees.

It was a peaceful enough scene. The rambler roses on the

terrace, the cool green park with its spreading trees and flowering shrubs, and behind me, up and away, stretching for miles, the sweeping contours of that breath-taking beauty, the Wienerwald.

Perhaps it was the quiet loveliness of the setting that made the evil in the midst of it seem so sinister. At any rate I felt a disagreeable sensation of nausea at the pit of my stomach, for the wooded hills immortalized by Strauss's melody were infested by the armies of Nazi Germany on manœuvres, and of the occupants of the park-like grounds, the majority had lost the kindly light of reason.

A tall, grey-haired man passed across my line of vision. He walked to the end of the path, turned, and walked back again. He had been doing this without variation for the best part of two hours.

I looked away. I did not want to meet those kind, patient brown eyes, nor watch the straight soldierly back as it passed to and fro, to and fro, seemingly world without end.

Sometimes I walked with the *Rittmeister* and joined him on his shuttle pilgrimage. To talk to, he was charming, and so interesting. The stories of his cavalry days were gay and full of humour. The descriptions of the gala performances in the Spanish Riding School would have delighted the heart of any historian. The shrewd comments on the politics of the moment, on war in general and on the mechanization of the army showed him to be an able strategist and a man of sharp perception.

"What's the matter with the *Rittmeister*?" I said one day to the physician-in-charge, "he looks as fit as a fiddle, and there certainly doesn't seem to be much the matter with his brain!"

"That is the curious part of it," replied Doctor Halbern; "as you say, there does not seem anything the matter with his brain, and yet the poor chap can neither sit nor lie down."

"Can't sit down?" I gazed at the doctor in amazement until the full significance of the statement struck me.

"Good Lord!" I said, "how frightful! But what on earth causes a brain-kink like that?"

Doctor Halbern's manner stiffened.

"That," he said, "is a professional matter which I am not at liberty to discuss with you."

I was surprised. I had always found "the Chief" forthcoming about his patients and glad to talk about them, especially to someone genuinely interested and not morbidly inquisitive. I suspected that the doctor's reticence was due to political discretion rather than to medical etiquette and as my curiosity was aroused I went in search of further information from the founder and director of this hospital for mental cases, who had lately been deposed from that position owing to his insufficiency of aryan grandparents.

"Oh, the *Rittmeister*? Yes, I can tell you all about him. It is a particularly interesting case and I have great hopes of a recovery. He has twice been able to lie down without help during the last week and that is a most encouraging sign."

I did not give an answering smile for to me it seemed quite appalling that a large able-bodied soldier should require two male attendants to put him to bed because his legs refused to answer to his will.

"What I want to know," I said, "is what causes a thing like that. Why, good heavens, it might happen to me!"

"Yes, Jeremy," replied the world-famous neurologist quietly, "it might. Very great emotion, stress, fatigue, shock, any of these things will sometimes affect the most balanced of minds, and you, if I may say so, are more sensitive, more highly-strung than the majority of your compatriots."

I felt rather uncomfortable. More than once I had found the professor's small, sharp, blue eyes fixed on me intently. It was disturbing to feel that you were being turned inside out like a suitcase in the hands of a customs official, and it was even more disconcerting when the searcher was your brother-in-law and you sensed that he was aware that you were doing your best to get his wife away from him.

"I dare say you're right," I remarked rather resentfully, and then realizing that the tone of my voice had been ungracious if not verging on the peevish, I added the somewhat feeble explanation: "I've always been up in the sky one minute and down in the depths the next. But tell me," I added, switching the conversation away from the personal aspect to which it had veered, "what made the *Rittmeister* queer like that? He seems such a—well, *solid* sort of person. Or shouldn't I ask?"



"Yes, you can ask, and I can answer. The *Rittmeister* comes of a family long associated with the monarchy. You must know the name. Although he was never connected with any anti-Nazi activities, that name was enough. He had his estates, money, horses, everything confiscated. That is nothing. It happens to us all. But the *Rittmeister* had many friends and he was a very popular member of society. The Gestapo kept him standing for seven hours while they 'questioned' him about his friends. They learnt nothing, naturally. Finally they let him go, but what he endured affected him so much that he has never been able to relax since. He sleeps, of course, with drugs."

I said nothing. There was, after all, nothing to be said. I offered Conrad a cigarette and we smoked in silence. It was just another of those countless tragedies with which the world, and particularly his part of the world, was filled to overflowing.

That conversation was three weeks ago. Now, as I sat in the park and waited for Clare and saw the familiar figure on its well-worn beat, I felt that sense of baffled fury which I was continually experiencing whenever I came in close contact with yet another victim of the *Herrenvolk* of Greater Germany.

Would nothing stop this robot race with their mass-production mentality from seizing the wealth, the art, the science, the tradition, the culture, the freedom, the very soul of one of the oldest bulwarks of Christianity in order to pound it into a monstrous mould of their own shaping as a burnt-offering to a heathen god? Was it possible that these governing gangsters could set such mortal terror in the hearts of men that the stronger sought escape in death, and the weaker in insanity?

As if in answer to my unspoken question the sound of a car turning in at the lodge gates broke in on my thoughts. I moved towards it in idle curiosity and watched it through the trees as it wound up the long avenue. Something in the size of the car and the speed at which it was driven arrested my attention and I observed it closely as it passed the bend quite near to where I was standing.

It was a long seven-seater Horch; black, powerful, and business-like. Inside were several men. They were also black, powerful, and business-like. As one of them moved, a red armlet made a

bright splash of colour as startlingly out of place as a poppy in the buttonhole of a dinner jacket.

I stiffened instinctively, my senses alert, like an animal that has scented danger.

Simultaneously a man detached himself from the nearest group under the trees and in a few strides was beside me.

"Quick, Mr. Greig," he said in an urgent whisper. "Quick, get the professor and tell him the S.S. are here! Say: 'Arnheim.' He'll know. Here, take my key. He'll be in the men's wing. For God's sake get there—it's life or death! Tell him——"

But I was not waiting for any more. I was away and off up the slope like a stag, my lanky legs flying over bushes and flowerbeds at a speed that would have done honour to my hurdling days at the Varsity.

Doubling round the back of the hospital, I opened a small side door and sprinting down the corridor and up some steps I unlocked the door leading to the men's mental ward and promptly cannoned into one of the nurses.

"Where's the professor?" I panted, "it's very urgent!"

The man gave me a quick look and pointed down the passage.

"He's with number four," he said, "but I don't know——"

I never knew what it was he did not know, for I was already opposite the door marked "4," and peering through the glass peep-hole, I could see Conrad in deep conversation with an old, bald-headed man with a sickly white face.

I unlatched the door with my pass-key before the doctor had time to say "come in" to my peremptory knock.

"I am sorry to disturb you, professor," I said, trying to keep my voice quiet and unhurried, "but might I have a few words with you?"

Conrad Cahn was not a famous psychologist for nothing, and even if the sight of a guest in the barred wing of the hospital were not sufficient to tell him that all was not well, something in my face must have warned him that the matter was serious, for his whole body and mind seemed to spring into action instantaneously. Nevertheless he excused himself to his patient with his habitual charm of manner and left the room without the least sign of haste. Only when we were safely out of sight and

earshot did he turn to me for the explanation of my unexpected appearance.

I wasted no breath.

"The S.S. are here!" I said. "Braun told me to get you quickly and to say 'Arnheim.'"

For an instant Conrad's blue eyes narrowed almost to slits, but otherwise his round, cheerful face betrayed no emotion.

"Come with me," he said, "I may want you. Is Braun coming up?"

"I don't know."

"Pray heaven he does. Get into your pyjamas, Paul," he said, addressing the occupant of a room at the end of the passage which we had just entered, "the Gestapo are here! Help him, Jeremy, I'll be back in a moment. *Geheimrat* Dr. Arnheim—Mr. Upton-Greig," he added as if we were meeting at a tea-party.

Well! I had been in some odd situations in my time, but nothing to equal this. Here I was in a padded cell with barred windows and a door that automatically snapped to, being solemnly introduced to a lunatic and requested to help strip him!

If anyone but Conrad had suggested such a thing to me I should in all probability have hesitated to do anything, but there was something so utterly compelling in his firm, even voice, and he radiated such an atmosphere of complete mastery and confidence that it never entered my head not to obey him implicitly. Almost before I realized it, I was on my hands and knees tearing the patient's shoes and socks off and hustling him out of his clothes.

I had hardly got the man into his pyjamas when Conrad was at my elbow again. He carried a hypodermic and some bottles in one hand, and had a strange-looking contraption over his arm.

The patient had some drops put into his eyes, and then to my speechless astonishment he meekly allowed himself to be strapped into what turned out to be a strait-waistcoat.

A glimmer of daylight was just beginning to penetrate my somewhat addled brain when Conrad's crisp orders routed any ideas of my own that might, or might not, have been conclusive.

"Get into bed, Paul. Here, I'll help you. Don't worry now

you'll be all right. Leave everything to me. Jeremy, put his clothes away. Tidy the room. Get rid of those cigarette ends. Be quick, please."

Conrad's voice was hardly raised, but every word was a command, and suddenly I realized how it was that he had managed, almost single-handed, to stamp out a bad epidemic of typhus in a camp where he was a prisoner of war.

At that moment Braun appeared in the doorway. He took in the scene with one swift, intelligent glance and gave a sigh of evident relief.

Cahn's face lit up, and he grasped the young attendant by the arm.

"Thank God you've come," he said. "That makes it much easier. Right, take over! Wait!" he added, as he strode over to the stiff figure on the bed, "let's have your arm, Paul."

He disinfected the skin and injected the contents of the hypodermic into his friend's arm. Almost immediately the *Geheimrat* became unconscious and Conrad with the utmost deliberation hit him full on the mouth. He used the back of his hand and the heavy signet ring made a nasty cut in Arnheim's lip which began to swell at once. Even Braun appeared astonished and asked with a puzzled expression:

"Why did you do that, Herr Professor?"

But Conrad did not answer. He had his head turned towards the door and he was listening. For all his sixty years his hearing must have been remarkably acute, because it was not until several seconds later that I heard it too.

It was the tramp of heavy boots in the uncarpeted corridor that led from the main building to the mental wards.

For an instant the doctor looked intently at the motionless man on the bed. Then he spoke:

"Braun, get some sticking-plaster and strap up his lip. Jeremy, come with me."

We left the room quickly but we had barely reached the bay window in the passage when there was the click of a turning key in the door at the far end and it opened towards us.

Conrad stood still, and taking something out of his pocket he held it up to the light, his hand on my arm.

"Look at the negative," he whispered, and in a voice which

was much louder than that which he normally used he said:

"On the left, do you see? There, where the inflammation has damaged the tissues. The brain itself is unimpaired, but with the smallest recurrence—oh, excuse me a moment, will you? I see we have visitors." He turned calmly towards the four men whose black uniforms now completely blocked the passage.

With them stood Doctor Halbern, evidently very ill at ease and rather nervous. He looked towards the professor and informed him in a stammering tone that the *Kreisleiter* had honoured them with an inspection of the hospital and then he turned to the foremost of the formidable figures beside him and added, somewhat hastily:

"Doctor Cahn, is, you know, in charge of the patient whom you—I—er—I mean, in whom you are interested."

Conrad bowed gravely and imperturbably while the *Kreisleiter* looked him over rather as one might some unpleasant thing that the cat has brought in on a wet night.

"I understood," he said icily to Halbern, "that you had superseded Doctor Cahn in his duties here."

"Yes indeed! That is quite correct. Of course. But it was agreed that the professor should continue to handle certain cases where he had already commenced treatment, until I was able to procure a *Primarius* to help me."

"I see. But I did not know that Paul Arnheim was a Jew."

"He isn't, *Herr Kreisleiter*!"

"No? Then how is it that he is being attended by one? The rules are very strict in this respect as you are no doubt aware, Doctor Halbern."

The physician-in-charge cleared his throat nervously.

"Yes, yes, of course," he said, "naturally, I know the rule. But the fact is, the fact is—"

"Yes?" The Nazi leader looked at the flustered doctor sardonically.

"The fact is," broke in Cahn's matter-of-fact voice, "that Professor Arnheim's mother has some Jewish blood. It is somewhat remote, I understand, so that her son could not in any way be counted a non-aryan; all the same, you will appreciate that the Chief, Dr. Halbern, does not care to handle a patient

whose race is not *absolutely* pure, if it can be avoided, and to spare him this—er—inconvenience, I have accepted the responsibility of dealing with a non-Jewish case, and I am prepared to pay the fine should it be considered necessary to impose it.”

The *Kreisleiter* flushed angrily and glared at the little man who had so neatly turned the argument against him, but he found it difficult to meet the ironic humour of the blue eyes that looked so serenely into his, and was obliged to turn away with an impatient gesture.

“We are wasting time,” he said abruptly. “I want to see this fellow. Here, Schmidt, look through these rooms on the right, and you, Bachmann, those on the left.”

“But *Herr Kreisleiter*——” Halbern’s agonized voice broke in on the clicking of heels that accompanied the directions to the Nazi staff. “You don’t wish to visit the *other* patients?”

“Naturally! I want to see who you’ve got here.”

“But the patients in this wing are all serious cases,” expostulated the frantic doctor. “Some are dangerously mad, and the sight of—of visitors might excite them and give them a bad set-back. Surely the *Herr Kreisleiter* understands? This is an asylum!”

“Yes, and a jolly sight too comfortable at that! Looks to me more like an expensive hotel than a home for imbeciles. Oh well, that will all be changed very soon, and these absurd sanatoriums for nervous diseases abolished. Nerves, indeed! We have no time and no place for half-wits in the Third Reich!”

Conrad smiled to himself as he recollected that Field-Marshal Göring had been only too glad to retire to a nursing-home for nervous diseases in order that he might be cured of—well, one of the ills that is treated in such places.

Meanwhile the obese Schmitt was rattling at the handle of the nearest door, from behind which small inarticulate cries could be heard.

“Open that door at once!” bellowed the *Kreisleiter* in a furious voice. “Come on, what are you hiding?”

“Hiding?” Two angry spots appeared on Doctor Halbern’s cheeks as his professional pride began to take ascendancy over his temporary panic. “Nothing,” he remarked coldly. “The *Herr Kreisleiter* is obviously unaware that *all* doors in establishments

treating lunacy lock automatically. Since you *insist*—" he added, shrugging his shoulders and taking out his pass-key, "but please understand that the State must accept full responsibility; as a doctor, I decline it."

He unlocked the door as he spoke and two of the S.S. men walked through it.

Never as long as I live shall I forget the screams that issued from that room. They were thin and high and reminded me of the unpleasant sound that a hare sometimes makes when wounded. I sprang forward instinctively but the two Nazi guards standing irresolutely on the threshold blocked my way. Over their shoulders I could see into the room. It was the same number "four" from which I had fetched Conrad, but this time the bald-headed old man was under the bed. His fat, white face was pressed against the skirting board, and while his flabby hands made feeble movements in the air as if to push back something, screech upon screech came from his shrivelled throat.

The *Kreisleiter* gave an exclamation of disgust.

"Who is the old fool?" he asked sharply.

"Max Rosenberg."

"What? Not Rosenberg the 'cellist'?"

"Yes."

"But, good gracious, he went off his head years ago!"

"Precisely."

"You don't mean to tell me that you've had him here all this time?"

"Oh no. Herr Rosenberg left here some five years ago, completely cured. He was readmitted six months ago, on November 11, 1938, to be precise," remarked Doctor Halbern significantly; "and now," he added sourly, "he is likely to be here for good."

"Is that remark in the nature of a criticism?" demanded the Nazi chief, his eyes dangerously angry.

"As the medical officer in charge of this hospital—yes!" replied Halbern unabashed. "As an original member of the National Socialist Party—no!"

It was a good answer, and the *Kreisleiter* looked at the doctor with curiosity mingled with not a little respect, and when he next spoke his voice was normal, almost conciliatory.

"All right, Schmidt," he said, "stand here in the corridor. And you, Bachmann, take a look through those spyholes and make a note of what you see. But if you start any more of these loonies yelling I'll lock you up with them, do you hear?"

The man's rather cod-like eyes protruded still further at this threat, but he merely raised his hand in the Nazi salute and tiptoed obediently if ludicrously to the next door to fix his fishy orbit upon the hapless occupant behind it.

"Now then!" barked the *Kreisleiter*, as if to suggest that the whole party had been holding him up, "I want to see Arnheim at once."

Doctor Halbern made a vague gesture in the direction of Conrad, who seemed to be the only person in the building completely unconcerned. The little man nodded his head and remarked to the *Kreisleiter* in a non-committal tone:

"You have heard, of course, that the *Geheimrat* is seriously ill, mentally?"

The Nazi gave a snort.

"So I'm told, but seeing is believing!" he said, rudely.

"Quite so," remarked Conrad smoothly, "but under the circumstances perhaps it would be advisable for Doctor Halbern to introduce you to the patient. You will, I feel sure, prefer to accept his diagnosis rather than mine."

"Oh no, professor, certainly not. He is your patient; carry on!" It was Halbern who spoke.

"If you please, Chief." Cahn was firm. "You know that I am only too glad to have your opinion on my cases, and naturally it would be both distasteful and unconvincing for the *Herr Kreisleiter* to accept a statement from a Jew."

Halbern went scarlet. Almost everything that he knew about psychiatry he had learnt from Conrad, first as a raw junior and later as second-in-command. He had worked with him day in, day out, for many years until with the coming of the Swastika to Austria he had been told to step into his senior's shoes and take charge of the hospital, whilst the specialist was permitted to act as assistant on sufferance, until the time came for him to be struck off the rolls of the profession to which he had devoted his whole heart and skill for forty years.



Swept off his feet by wonderful visions of a superbly healthy new race, dazzled by tales of housing schemes and better conditions for workers, impressed by the importance the German government was giving to physical culture and outdoor holidays, young Doctor Halbern was easily converted to the Nazi doctrine. Like many another he was not much interested in anything outside his own sphere, least of all in politics, and as his hospital work kept him extremely busy he did not associate himself actively in any way with the Party except to give occasional lectures on hygiene to the Youth Movement. Consequently it was not until after the *Anschluss*, when he was brought into direct contact with realistic Nazi methods, that he suddenly became aware of the maelstrom into which he had plunged. He would have liked to draw back. It was too late. He had been blind too long. The organization with its relentless efficiency held him firmly in its grip, and as a member of it he found that he had obligations that he was expected to fulfil and orders that he was compelled to carry out. Alarmed and disillusioned, he turned more than ever to his profession, and soon found that by keeping in with the authorities he, personally, was able to render far greater service to suffering humanity than in the days of liberty when all who wished to do so were free to minister to the bodies and the souls of their fellow-men. It was, therefore, with rather a heavy heart that he preceded the *Kreisleiter* down the passage and opened the door of Arnheim's room.

For a second he stood stock still; then stepping aside he allowed the Nazi to enter.

Braun, who was sitting on a chair by the bed, immediately sprang to attention and raising his hand he uttered a "Heil Hitler" that echoed from one end of the wing to the other, much to Conrad's controlled amusement.

The *Kreisleiter* seemed considerably taken aback and he looked from the stiff figure on the bed to the even stiffer one of the attendant beside it with a puzzled expression.

"What's all this?" he asked irritably.

"This? *Herr Kreisleiter*?" Halbern adopted his most professional manner. "This is one of the padded rooms that we use for dangerous cases. As you see, there is no ordinary furniture, and the bed and the chair are soft so that the patient cannot

injure himself. How did he get that cut on this face?" He turned to Braun, his voice taking on a sharp note.

"I am sorry, *Herr Chef*, I am afraid it was my fault."

"Very careless! How did it happen?"

"The *Herr Geheimrat* threw himself down on his face and his mouth caught my boot. I should have had on my sandshoes, but I had no time to change. I was in a hurry to reach the patient, as it was evident from the message I received that he was about to have another seizure."

"I see. A regrettable accident, but in the circumstances, excusable."

"Thank you, *Herr Chef*."

"It was a bad attack, I take it?"

"As the *Herr Chef* can see!" Braun indicated the strait-waistcoat with an expressive gesture.

Halbern nodded and walking over to the foot of the bed, he looked down on the recumbent man thoughtfully. Then he turned to the uniformed figure in the doorway and remarked, with a touch of irony:

"Well, *Herr Kreisleiter*, are you satisfied?"

"No, I'm *not*! He looks quiet enough trussed up there like a fowl, but how do I know that he's not foxing, or you either?"

The doctor went rather white but before he could say anything Braun hastily interrupted.

"Have I permission to speak to the *Herr Kreisleiter*?" He received a grunted assent and continued rapidly:

"After any kind of fit where the patient is very violent, he eventually becomes completely exhausted. Sometimes we have a dangerous collapse," he explained, "but where the brain is affected, particularly with mental complaints connected with epilepsy, the eyes are often impaired. If the *Herr Kreisleiter* will give himself the trouble of examining the patient's eyes, here, he will see what I mean."

Doctor Halbern made a movement as if to place himself between the form on the bed and the black shadow that was approaching it, but the red armlet with the crooked cross brushed him aside as if he were a fly.

Braun, apparently anxious to please, took a small torch out of his pocket, and beckoning to the Nazi leader he lifted Arnheim's

lids with his finger and thumb whilst he shone the light full in his eyes.

The pupils, dark and dilated, were turned on the *Kreisleiter* with a bold, unwinking stare. They did not blink at the light nor alter their expression, but remained focused on him with almost malevolent intensity. There was something horrible in the glassy fixity of the look that made the Nazi flinch, and as Braun moved the lids up and down and still the eyeballs remained motionless, riveted upon him with that expressionless penetrating gaze, it was obvious that the *Kreisleiter* was startled. He looked from the doctor standing grimly beside him to the nurse flicking his torch up and down like a museum guide exhibiting a show mummy. He looked at the helpless man on the bed all straps and buckles. He looked again at those dreadful cataleptic eyes still gazing at him vacantly yet piercingly, and suddenly, with a string of oaths, he turned on his heel and strode out of the room.

## CHAPTER II

*Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever  
Or the priest of the bloody faith,  
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
Whose waves they have tainted with death*

SHELLEY

HALF-AN-HOUR later I was sitting at the wheel of my Ford with Clare beside me, and we were driving through the forest.

"Where are we going?" she said.

"I don't know and I don't care, so long as we get away from that place"

"All right, my dear, but if you keep turning right we *shall* be back there whether you like it or not!"

"Nonsense! I've got a very good bump of locality and I'm sure this brings us out on to the main road."

"Sorry, Jug, but it doesn't. It makes a wide circle and brings us out a mile from the lodge gates, if you want to know."

"Damn! Then I must back and turn."

"You needn't 'do that. There's a lane at the top of the rise which will bring us out. It's a bit rough, but wide enough for the car. I've often been up."

"Right you are." I turned obediently and was so busy trying to keep the wheels out of the ruts that I hardly noticed where we were going. Suddenly I looked up, and there in front of me was one of the loveliest views I had ever seen. We had been climbing steadily and the track opened out on to the crest of a hill with a heath-like plateau. For miles and miles the forest stretched away up and down as far as the eye could see, with here and there a main road gleaming white or a cluster of houses marking a small village.

"By Jove, that's pretty hot," I said, pulling up and hanging out of the window. "As a pompous planter once said to me in India when showing me over his tea estate: 'In England you'd have to pay to see a view like this!' It looks as if it went on for ever, but I suppose that's the end of it ahead of us where it gradually flattens out?"

"Yes, we're just on the fringe now. On the left, over there, is St Pölten, and you're looking towards Krems."

"Krems? But isn't that on the Danube?"

"Of course. It's the entrance, or the exit, whichever way you're going, to the Wachau."

"D'you know, I've never been through the Wachau!"

"Haven't you? I thought you'd seen everything there was to be seen in this country. You know it far better than most Austrians."

"I know. I've been meaning to go for years, but somehow I've never got there."

"Well, why don't we go now?"

"Now?"

"Yes, why not? It's barely an hour's run from here, and we could potter along the Danube, cross by the ferry, and dine at Melk."

"Clare dear, you have your moments, and this is certainly one of them! It sounds a peach of a plan to me. What about Conrad?"

"He has to go to Wien tonight anyway, and won't be back till after supper. I'll have a message telephoned through to say that we'll be late."

"Grand! wine, wimmen and Wachau! Come on, which way do we go?"

Narrow roads bordered by charming farms, little houses, and here and there an old castle, led us, rambling across country, until we came to the bridge over the Danube at Krems.

Turning left after we had crossed it we immediately entered the reach of the river which is so popular and whose fame I soon discovered was well deserved. An enthusiastic motorist, I had seen most of the well-known sights of Europe, and had cruised along the banks of many famous waterways, from the Rhine—that overcrowded paradise of tourists—to remote rivers in the Balkans, but seldom, I think, had I ever been so moved by landscape beauty as on that late afternoon in July when I was introduced to the Wachau.

It was so very right. Not too sophisticated; not too wild. Not too barren; not too lush. The villages not too musical-comedy; the castles not too grand-opera. Lovely outlines; charming foreground, and the whole scene utterly satisfying to all the senses.

The peace and delight of the place had just begun to soothe my rather raw nerves, when they were set on edge again by a discordant note. The note was a musical one, or came, at least, under that heading, for the high-pitched monotonous air could hardly be termed melodious. We were just leaving Spitz, a little town attractive enough to win the heart of even the most blasé tourist, when we were held up by a traffic block. Swinging along the road, their childish voices piping out the hackneyed tune, came the local Hitler Youth. The older boys strutted already, their heads in the air and their young faces deadly serious with the earnest business of being future Nazis. The little ones looked pathetically tired. Some were limping a little but not daring to fall out or lag behind. Others were whitefaced and breathing jerkily, but all were marching; marching relentlessly towards that goal on the road to which their lords and masters had set many other small and blistered feet. What was that goal? I wondered, as the children passed me by. The refrain of their marching-song, forced out of dusty throats, echoed in my ears with unexpected significance, and suddenly I went cold and sick with fear.

"Today Germany is ours; tomorrow—the whole world."

Was that it? Was world-conquest the aim? Was Conrad right? Was an appalling conflict brewing in the devil's cauldron?

In that minute of waiting, the whole of eternity seemed suspended and I could almost hear my heart beating out the seconds. I knew the answer. As surely as I knew that one day I should die the awful certainty bore down upon me. They say that convictions grow. This one did not grow. It burst upon me like a bomb. Like a bomb! Yes, that was it. In a flash I seemed to see the destruction of all mankind, drowned in a sea of blood. Was it the end of the world, perhaps? I am not what is strictly speaking termed religious, though the faith of my fathers is as firmly ingrained in my mind as is their tradition in my bones, but in that fateful moment I found myself praying frantically, agonizingly, over and over again: "Oh God, don't let it happen, don't let it happen!"

"What on earth's the matter, Jug? You look as white as a sheet!"

"I? er—do I? Oh, its nothing!" I babbled incoherently,

dragging my thoughts back from that bottomless pit of horror into which they had plunged. Whatever happened, Clare mustn't know. She mustn't guess. No inkling of my fear must reach her.

"Those Nazi brats always get on my nerves," I said, by way of explanation, "and I've had enough of the whole brood today to last me for some time. Come on, don't let's think about them, let's look at the Danube instead! It's a glorious river, isn't it? But there's not much 'blue' about it here, is there?"

The water in question was muddy. Stirred up by the recent rains, no doubt, but anyway its yellowish-brown hue was far removed from the colour Strauss had painted it.

"No, it's not blue, *now*."

There was a curious inflexion in Clare's voice that made me look at her quickly.

"Now?"

"I was wondering if it would ever be blue again."

"What d'you mean?"

"Don't you see? Everything's brown in this country. Even *this* is discoloured. It's the Brown Danube, now."

God! there it was again! No escape anywhere. The spell of that enchanting countryside completely broken. The melody of the immortal waltz interrupted by a vulgar jingle. Our happy little excursion marred by frightening thoughts.

"Blast them!" I cried vehemently. "God damn the lot of them!"

Clare looked at me critically.

"You don't often swear like that, Jug," she said. "Better tell me all about it and get it off your chest. I've never seen you so het up."

"This is an awful country!" I burst out. "You can't go on living in it, Clare, you simply *can't*."

Clare raised her eyebrows and looked at me quizzically.

"There's nothing new in that," she remarked dryly, "except that you've only just discovered it. And of course I can go on living in it. I have to."

"But that's just it, you don't have to! That's what's so maddening. For that matter nobody has to. None of this need have happened if only the Austrians had taken a strong line. But they're so inept, so feeble, that they just take this invasion of

their country lying down. When they're not 'Heiling' every five minutes to curry favour, they're wearing some Nazi badge or other, the hypocrites, to keep their skins whole or their pockets full. It makes me sick to see a nation so spineless. Degenerates, that's what they are! I wonder old Maria Theresa doesn't shake the foundations of the Kapuzinergruft turning in her coffin!"

"Feel better? You ought to after that peroration, even though most of it was stuff and nonsense."

I had to laugh. Clare was always deliciously frank.

"I shan't get a swollen head living with you, shall I?"

"Who said you were going to live with me?"

"Come, come! have you forgotten the promises you made to me when I first went to India? You know you said that you'd keep house for me in my old age! Anyway, what I've just said about the Austrians is true, and you know it."

"I admit there's a substratum of truth, but like most of your ideas its exaggerated, and makes me wonder what your opinion will be in six months' time."

"It'll be the same, only worse!"

"Will it? I wonder. You've a short memory, Jug. At the beginning of your leave you were telling me how wonderful the German system was and how salutary it would be for this country."

"I said it was wonderful? What absolute rot! Clare dear, you must be crazy. You'll be telling me next that I was pro-Nazi!"

"So you were!"

"Well——!" For a second I was speechless and then remembering that Clare was always pulling my leg, I grinned at her.

"No, you don't!" I said. "I just *won't* rise, so there!"

She smiled back at me and patted my knee.

"You're a good-natured creature, aren't you? Yes, I believe that's half the trouble."

"Half the trouble of what?"

"Of our foreign politics, or the lack of them. We *are* a good-natured, kindly race, tolerant of the other fellow's methods, though exasperatingly patronizing over them, but oh!—lord, we're such fools—such God-Almighty fools!"



"We can't be such fools as all that, or the British Empire wouldn't be what it is."

"There you are, Jug. You're just a living example of the mentality of the average Englishman: smugly satisfied with what your fathers and grandfathers have done for you and sitting back and taking it for granted that the British Empire can never be shaken from its foundations."

"Well, I don't think it can. Not in our lifetime, anyhow."

"I suppose you're right. I hope to God you *are* right! But I'm desperately afraid sometimes. You don't know the terrific power of these devils. They don't know it in England. No one seems to realize the danger."

"I don't think we have ever underestimated the Germans."

"I think you're underestimating them now, or rather we are, for you know very well that though I'm an American by birth, my home is England and I think as an Englishwoman."

"Yes, but you're wrong there. Naturally we know what a powerful nation they are. We must have been a bit alarmed or we wouldn't have let them walk into Czechoslovakia."

"We may know something of their military power; I'm sure I hope so, otherwise it seems a pity to pay an Intelligence Service, but I don't believe we've got the measure of the 'X' factor in their armament."

"What do you mean? Some sort of secret weapon?"

"Yes, only not as you understand it. I think I know what their secret weapon is: it's fear!"

"Fear?"

"Yes, fear. Not fear as you and I interpret the word: a nice healthy fright which makes you sweat like a pig and brings your heart into your mouth, but a dark creeping terror, insidious, penetrating, that eats into your courage like a corrosive into metal until even the truest steel snaps at a blow."

I had been listening to Clare placidly and contentedly because a friendly argument such as we were having was a frequent occurrence between us and always gave me considerable interest and pleasure. Now, suddenly, there was no pleasure, and she conveyed to me the sense of horror she must herself have been feeling, and which I had experienced myself in another way on seeing the Hitler Youth. This was a different fear; but if any-

thing it was even more horrible. Why, only that morning I had asked myself why people should have to commit suicide in order to escape it. I saw again the Rittmeister's monotonous pacing and Braun's anxious eyes as the Horch sped up the drive. I saw old Rosenberg's white face pressed against the wall and the queer enigmatic smile of one of the women patients who had twice tried to hang herself. I saw innumerable twitching faces and restless hands in the trams, the trains, the streets. The furtive whispering; the backward glances; the whole atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust, and agonized apprehension that had settled like a fog over one of the most light-hearted, laughter-loving, care-free peoples in the world.

"It's terrible, isn't it?" I said, following my own train of thought more than Clare's remarks. "I expect these poor Austrians aren't really so much to blame as one thinks. Fear is a catching thing and it spreads like the devil."

"They are to blame though, all the same."

"But dash it, my dear, a minute ago when I said so, you told me that I was talking rot."

"So you were, old thing!"

"Well, I can't put my hands up and call 'Kamerad,' or I shall run into the ditch, but I'm blessed if I know what else there is for me to do! First it isn't their fault, and then it is, and which ever way I say it is, I'm wrong every time! Dearest sweetest sister, label me as slightly wanting if you must, but I don't want to qualify for a place in Conrad's institution, and I shall if you don't make your lucid statements even more crystal-clear!"

"I'll try, though it's not easy. I know just what I mean in my own mind but it's so difficult to explain. If you were to put all the thoughts you've ever had about Germany and Austria into a shaker, if you added a dash of understanding, grated some hard common sense on top, and served well iced, I think you might produce a Verisimilitude Cocktail."

"A *what*? Look, dear, I haven't got my *Thesaurus* at the moment, so would you please use simple words and tell a simple fellow what it means."

"Don't be silly! It means an air of truth. But listen, when I said a little while ago that you used to be pro-Nazi, you thought I was ragging, but actually I meant it."

"Don't be absurd!"

"I'm not absurd, and don't interrupt. Of course I don't mean that you liked the Gestapo and the Jew-baiting, the concentration camps or the purges, but like a great many Englishmen you had an admiration, and not a sneaking one either, for their efficiency and organization. D'you remember writing to me after the *Anschluss* when I was in the depths of despair, and telling me to cheer up as 'it wasn't as bad as all that'? 'After all,' you wrote, 'there's a lot to be said for the German system, it's very thorough and practical and at least it gets somewhere!' You told me you thought that the *Anschluss* would make for prosperity in Austria; that it would re-build the country financially and economically; that Austria could never get along alone. and would just go on floundering in hopeless inefficiency until the unemployment and misery reduced her to complete ruin. You said it would do the Austrians a jolly lot of good to be made to work hard, and that this was not the time to go through life dreaming and philandering. You said, if I remember rightly, that no amount of marching and herding would ever prevent the Austrian from being an individual and that he had too much sense of humour to be reduced to a mere cypher. In fact, on looking through your letters of that period, and I read them again the other day, an unbiased opinion would be that you regarded National Socialism as a constructive and progressive reform very beneficial to a decadent and declining State."

For quite a few minutes I said nothing. It is always rather disconcerting to find one has been exceptionally stupid and try as I might there was no getting away from it. I decided to give in gracefully and admit that I had been somewhat obtuse.

"I must have been quite idiotic," I said, "because of course I *did* think just what you say; I remember now, perfectly. How could I have been so blind? It's not as if I'd never been to Germany. I was there two years. I ought to have known what they were like. I can't think why I didn't see it. Somehow they always seemed rather homely and friendly to me. I got on awfully well with that family I stayed with; they were really very good to me. I used to be rather amused at the terribly serious ideas they had; they made life such an earnest affair. And of course they were all turned out after a pattern and

showed not a vestige of originality, but there was certainly nothing that I could see to indicate the brutality and sadism that is so conspicuous now. Perhaps I did register, at least subconsciously, that they were *too* efficient; dangerously so; but though they didn't strike me as exactly harmless, I never sensed any evil. Yes, that's the crux of the whole thing: I never saw the evil! Why didn't I? I'm not really unobservant, nor lacking in intuition, but I missed the *leit motif* though it was being played right into my ear! God knows, those appalling yellow-brown uniforms with the cheap black boots used to make me squirm. I've never seen anything to compare with such hideosity. It should have warned me. When I think of all those lovely old houses and historic buildings in many of the German towns smothered from roof to cellar in that awful blood-red drapery to mark some Nazi birthday, and when I think of the millions of fat red necks and shaven bullet-heads emerging from those mustard collars, I should have known; I should have known that when a whole nation's outer trappings are without one redeeming touch of the aesthetic, they can only be a covering for an even greater ugliness beneath. Clare, dear, how in Heaven's name could I have been such an outsized simpleton?"

"Fairly easily, I should think!" replied Clare dryly, "judging by the good company you were in. After all, except for those races like the Poles that have an instinctive hatred for the Germans, about seventy per cent of the world thought much the same as you did, and even those that professed to be duly shocked by the Roehm murders, the various pogroms, and recently the rape of Czechoslovakia, have only expressed their disapproval in words and have washed their hands with that most ingenious of all alibis: 'but of course it doesn't really concern *us*.' Do you wonder that the Austrians were had for mugs? All your arguments and a great many more convincing ones were used to fool them. Why should we blame them? We go mincing up the garden path sniffing Nazi nosebags with sickening sentimentality!"

"Yes, accompanied by a marvellous propaganda machine to see that the tale works!"

"Exactly. And don't forget that when there are thousands of unemployed as I've seen them, in well-cut suits but with no

shirt, underclothes or socks, begging from door to door in mid-winter, the promise of work is irresistible even at the cost of freedom."

I nodded. "Beastly, isn't it? I must say I'd join any old party if I were cold and hungry and afraid I'd get no chance of work if I didn't!"

"Naturally. And there we are back at the secret weapon—fear again!"

"These brutes are clever the way they handle it, aren't they?"

"Horribly clever. That's what I'm afraid of, Jug. They have the most effective methods of blackmailing ever devised, and they know just how and where to put on the screw. They conquered Czechoslovakia by the strength of their arms, but they conquered Austria by the depth of their cunning, and I feel that that is the greater danger of the two; a danger we seem to shut our eyes to."

"I agree with you, Clare, but at the same time you mustn't forget that annexing this country was money for jam. If they tried it on a people with more guts and who weren't content to let things slide until the situation became irretrievable, it wouldn't come off. I can't imagine their monkey-tricks succeeding with any other nation except, perhaps, one of the Balkans who are so full of intrigue that they'll plot anything against anyone."

"Don't forget that they can pull that anti-Communist stuff on quite a lot of people, primarily Italy and Spain, but not forgetting my birth-place, America. Don't forget that Hitler was once a house-painter and that he's an adept at covering red bricks with whitewash. Don't forget his Gestapo make a note of every Achilles' heel they can find, and I'm afraid that they will find a good many before they've finished."

"You make it all sound very sinister, my dear."

"I think it is sinister."

"Oh, come on, don't be so gloomy! You've got the jim-jams, and I'm sure I don't wonder. That nursing home is enough to give them to anyone, and as if that weren't enough Conrad is always telling one that there's going to be a war. It's enough to get the wind up anyone."

"Conrad's not exactly a fool, you know."

"My dear, no one knows that better than I. The man's a genius! But just because you happen to be rather brilliant it doesn't follow that you have second sight, and people who assert with conviction that there's going to be a war are just talking through their hats."

I spoke rather sharply, trying perhaps to impress Clare, and subconsciously trying to convince myself that the light which had burst upon me a short while previously was but a chimera, and must at all costs not be confirmed by another opinion.

"Not necessarily. After all, when you spend thirty years studying people's brains you get to know their reactions, and Conrad has known quite a few of the high-ups not to mention the extremely intimate knowledge of Hitler as a medical case."

"How d'you mean?"

"Well, you know he had Klein's report."

"Klein?"

"Surely you remember Klein? He was at St. Anton when we were there five years ago."

"D'you mean that great big chap?"

"Yes. Don't you remember the silly jokes we used to make about his name? He used to ski with that tutor those English people had called Gross—a wisp of a man, and it was the standing joke of the place."

"Of course! I've got it now. I called him Dr. Dolittle!"

"And he loved it! He was a grand man, and so good-looking."

"Trust you to remember that! But good-looking or not, what's he got to do with Hitler?"

"A packet. He was the Führer's M.O. in the early days and looked after him for quite a while. He trained with Conrad you know, and was at the hospital for about a year. An exceedingly able young man, and we all thought that he had a great future. Conrad saw him from time to time and naturally they talked shop and Klein gave him a most detailed account of Hitler's fits, and I tell you what the pair of them don't know about the pathological side of that man is not worth knowing!"

"Is he really epileptic?"

"I'd be willing to take a bet on it, but I can't get Conrad to say so in so many words. He's afraid of making a statement like that even to me. But it's certain sure that he has *some kind of*

fits, and that they're getting more frequent. Even the layman knows that because he always goes to Berchtesgaden to recover, and when the papers say that he's gone for a rest and isn't receiving anyone, you know that he's suffering from another attack. Klein was very clever with him and apparently Hitler was grateful, because he warned him two days before the round-up of Jews in Germany to clear out lock, stock, and barrel within twenty-four hours, with the result that Klein got away with enough to live on for the rest of his life and is happily settled in England."

"Is that a fact, or just a story?"

"Gospel truth. Gives one a shock to hear anything good about Hitler, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does, though they do say that he is loyal to his friends."

"They can say what they like, but personally, however thrilling the experience, I don't think I'd care to put it to the test."

"Well, if you'd only try and put another experiment to the test, that of leaving your old Conrad and living for a change with human beings instead of among a lot of gangsters, you might make my life a shade more tolerable!"

Clare gave me a quick look. I suppose she must have noticed the bitterness in my voice for she made no reply. I had no sooner spoken than I could have bitten out my tongue, for I hated sarcasm as much as she did, but the words had slipped out before I could control them, probably because I was nervy and upset. I saw at once that I had hurt her, for she remained silent, and then lit a cigarette with her own matches, ignoring my offer of the car's lighter. She leant her head against the window and closed her eyes and I wondered what she was thinking. Ages after, she told me that she was trying to fight down the feeling of panic and rebellion that always surged over her in moments such as these, undermining her self-respect as well as her self-control. I looked across at her small, white face and at the thick mass of brown hair which lay in natural waves showing the shape of her neat, round head. The hair was slightly ruffled by the wind and I noticed with a sudden tightening of the throat that where it was brushed back from the temples there were a number of grey hairs among the brown. I started counting them,

lost count, started again and then realized that there were too many to count. It gave me a shock. Surely they hadn't been there at the beginning of my leave? Or had there been so few that they had escaped even my eagle eye? It was in the last six months, then? So much worry in so short a time! If she went on at this rate she would soon be white—but Clare was no age! Of course not; why, she was only thirty-eight, and that's not old—not old enough to be white. Well, she wasn't white yet, but next time that I came home—next time—in five years? Heavens! what might not happen in five years! Would Conrad survive? would he have work? Why, the Nazis might freeze Clare's money, and then what would they live on? It was an awful thought. I couldn't go back to India and leave her with such a sense of insecurity. How *could* I? I should never have a moment's peace. If anything happened I should be too far away to do any good; too far away to answer a cry for help! A flood of emotion swept over me in which feelings of love and tenderness, fear and anxiety, rage and resentment vied with each other for the upper hand, leaving me limp and shaken as if I had been battered by a tornado.

"Clare," I said softly; "Clare——"

There was no answer.

"Clare dear, I'm most awfully sorry!"

"It's all right." The voice was gentle, but it was flat and toneless and made my heart ache even more.

"Sis, I've been a beast. It was a silly thing to say to you, and you know I didn't mean it. I get so worked up, and I'm so dreadfully worried about you."

"I know, Jug. I understand. Only don't let's talk about it just now, d'you mind?"

I nodded miserably not knowing what to say, but fortunately by this time we had reached the ferry, and getting the car on board and taking the tickets broke up any form of intimate conversation and eased the tension.

On the other side of the river the monastery of Melk towered over the little town and stood out, an architectural and historical landmark, for many a mile. It is a fine building, and the situation, of course, superb. I was admiring it in silence when a policeman in bottle-green uniform addressed me:



"Beautiful, isn't it?" he said.

"I beg your pardon?" I answered, sure that I had not heard aright.

He repeated his remark, substituting the word *schön* for *fabelhaft*, as being probably more easily understood by a foreigner.

"It is indeed," I said warmly, quite taken aback at the human touch when I was expecting a demand for my papers.

"Yes, it's very fine," reiterated the policeman, and then he sighed a little sigh. "But I don't like it as well as Stams," he added.

"That's because you're a Tiroler!"

The man's face lit up. "How d'you know?" he asked, astonished.

"By your voice."

"But surely the Herr is English?"

"Yes, but I've travelled a great deal in Austria."

"Ah! Then perhaps you know Telfs?" His voice was eager.

"Of course. I've driven through it dozens of times on my way to and from the Arlberg and also going to Garmisch."

"That's my home town," he said delightedly. "D'you know the Bear Hotel?"

I said I did, though if he had mentioned the "Crown" or the "Lion" it would have been all the same to me.

"My father keeps the 'Bear.'"

"Does he really? I must remember that next time I go past."

"Oh, please do, and you will tell him that you have seen me, won't you? He will be so pleased to speak with someone who has seen me."

"Of course I will; but what are you doing here?"

The policeman threw up his hands and gave a *sotto voce* groan. "You may well ask," he said. "Idiotic, that's what it is, and wrong too, to send a man so far away from his people. It's all these silly new-fangled ideas. Makes me sick, I can tell you. We all used to do a spell in Innsbruck in the old days, but that's different; it's good experience to be in a town. But why send us three hundred miles away to a place where we know no one? That's the latest plan, and I expect some poor fellow is just as miserable and lonely in Telfs as I am here!"

"It certainly seems a little unnecessary, but I suppose it's to get you acquainted with as much of the country as possible?"

"Oh no, it's much simpler than that! It's to prevent us ever being on speaking terms with the anti-Nazis! You see they know that if a Tiroler happens to give one of these bouncing upstarts a black eye (a not unusual occurrence, mark you), that instead of arresting him or beating him up, we would look the other way."

"And have one later with him in the 'Bear,' eh?"

The policeman winked.

"I take it, then, that you are not entirely satisfied with the various changes?"

The majesty of the law gave me an expressive look and then spat energetically over the rail.

"Andreas Hofer," he said, "died to keep the Tirol free from the yoke of the foreigner."

I nodded. "Yes," I said, "I know. And yet most of your landsmen are ardent National Socialists."

"The ninnies! the nincompoops!" he exploded, swelling with rage until I thought that the buttons would part from the bottle-green tunic. "If they weren't all such unutterable fools, I should be in the 'Bear' now!"

I was wondering what was the correct reply to this type of logic when Clare came to my assistance.

"Come along with us to the 'White Ox,' " she said, "and have a glass of wine, or a Schnapps if you prefer it."

"Thank you, *Gnädige Frau*, it's very kind of you. but unfortunately I can't as I must get back to the station. I'm on duty at eight, and it wants but five minutes. Thank you all the same."

"What a pity," I said. "Well, then, *Aufwiedersehen* one day at Telfs! and *Grüss Gott!*"

"*Grüss Gott,*" he replied with a smile, "and a good appetite, and a good run!"

We waved to him as we drove off the ferry and watched his neat green figure walk off slowly towards his lonely quarters.

"A nice fellow," I said, "pity there aren't more of them."

We parked the car and strolled on to the terrace of the hotel. It overlooked the river and was deliciously cool and quiet, with little tables set between the trees and electric lights hung on the branches. An old waiter with a walrus moustache took our order and brought us some local wine in a carafe. We ate almost in

silence, grateful for the peaceful backwater and the restfulness of the old inn.

Only as we were sipping our coffee and I was puffing at my pipe did I lean over to Clare and ask her if she had quite forgiven me.

She held out her hand to me and I took it in both mine. She had admirable hands. They were small, artistic, and yet full of character. She used them continually to illustrate or emphasize her speech. Not gesticulating in the foreign manner, nor leaving them motionless in the English, but moving them expressively to strengthen her meaning. They were a constant joy to me and I was never tired of looking at them.

I turned the slim fingers over as I held them and as I gave them an affectionate squeeze I was amused to see the old waiter looking at me in a knowing way, as if to say: "I know what *that* means!"

"Lovely hands, Mrs. Muggins!" I whispered.

Clare's face lit up and she gave me one of those particularly sweet smiles that did so much to warm my heart.

"Goodness! what memories that conjures up," she said, chuckling. "Mrs. Muggins, indeed! How you used to tease me, Jug, about the hypothetical Mr. Muggins, and *almost* you persuaded me that there would be one! How old was I then?"

"Eleven," I answered promptly. "I'd just gone up to Cambridge and it was the year after mother died."

"Poor old Mums——" Clare made little pellets out of the soft part of the bread and looked at me meditatively. "It was a good thing she died before the war. I think it would have killed her to have you in France after losing your father on the Frontier. She adored him, didn't she?"

I nodded.

"Of course, I don't remember when he was killed," I said, "I was only four at the time, but she used to talk to me a lot about him when I was at school, about wanting me to grow up a fine, good man like Daddy, and all that sort of thing, and I had the impression that he was rarely out of her thoughts."

"What on earth possessed her to marry Silas G.?"

Whenever they referred to Clare's father he was always called by his Christian names as if he were a familiar stranger, for the

prosperous American had never succeeded in gaining his daughter's affection, and his stepson frankly disliked him.

"God knows! Not his money, anyway; there was nothing mercenary about mother. I rather fancy that he caught her on the rebound. She was desperately, appallingly lonely; you see Dad was a good deal older and had always done everything for her, and I suppose really she married Silas G. because she wanted someone to look after her. He did that all right, to give him his due, but I doubt if he could have made anyone happy."

"She must have felt that she was married to a public building! Still, mother was never really unhappy, you know; she was much too fond of us—or rather of you, for she never loved me deeply though she made a great show of affection for me."

"I always hoped that you hadn't realized that she—well, that I was her favourite."

"How could one fail to realize? My dear, she was awfully sweet and thoughtful, but you don't have to be eternally told that someone loves you; you know, you feel it!"

"Poor old Clare! What a shame; it must have been rotten for you!"

"Oh, I don't know—I don't think I minded terribly; you see, I had you!"

"Yes, but still—I mean it's not at all the same thing!"

Clare laughed, and leaning over she pulled the back of my hair where it grew into a little peak on my neck, a trick of hers that I had hated as a boy but that later I had grown to love.

"Not at all the same thing," she mimicked, "but *I* think it was something far better. It's not often that you get a father and mother and brother all rolled into one! That's what you've been to me, you know. A complete family; the nicest, sweetest family that anyone could hope to have!"

"Well," I said, blushing furiously but secretly enchanted with her words, "it wasn't very difficult. You see, I've always worshipped you. Mother used to be rather amused at what she called the one-man adoration society, and in a way I think she was relieved, because she felt guilty about not loving you outright as she loved me. I remember so well the day that you were born. When I peered over the edge of the bassinet you laughed

at me and I lost my heart to you there and then. I kept saying: 'Is she really my sister?' and I can see the odd expression on mother's face as she said: 'Would you like her all to yourself?' and when I said that I thought that would be wonderful she said: 'All right, Jeremy, only you must promise to take *great* care of her, always.' "

"And you have, haven't you?" said Clare, "you've always been there to spoil me and to tie up the cuts and the bruises both physical and metaphorical."

"I haven't been there at all!" I expostulated. "That's just the trouble. First there was the war, when I hardly saw you at all, and now since your marriage I only see you once in five years. I'm glad you call that 'all the time.' "

"What I meant is, that I feel you're there in the background."

"Thanks! but who wants to be in the background of any picture? I'd rather be one of the central figures!"

"Well, you're the central figure in my heart, you old jungle-wallah!" said Clare in a bantering tone, "and if that doesn't satisfy your manly vanity you'd better go get unto yourself an adoring girl-friend."

"Their affections wander so!" I said plaintively. "I'd rather have something that sticks to one."

"Why not leave tea-planting, then, and travel in fly-papers?"

"I would if I could hang the beastly things on to enough Viennese ceilings to earn me a living and enable me to keep a roving eye on a shapely leg—like yours!"

Clare jumped up and coming round to my side of the table she planted a kiss firmly on the top of my head just at the place where my ginger hairs were distressingly thin.

We leant on the stone wall overlooking the river, and at that moment we forgot the Nazis and the Jews, the problems and the worries, and were blissfully happy in each other's company, remembering silly escapades of our childhood, and calling up delightful ghosts of the past.

How long we stayed there I could not say, but I was brought back to the present by the pressure on my arm and an almost awed tone in Clare's voice as she pointed below us.

"Look at it!" she said.

The night sky was gentian-coloured and by the light of the rising moon it was reflected in the water which here, in the backwater, was flowing tranquilly and undisturbed.

"Yes," I agreed, tucking her elbow firmly under my arm.  
"Yes, it's the Blue Danube, to-night, dear Mrs. Muggins!"

## CHAPTER III

*Salvation is from the Jews.*

ST. JOHN

CONRAD sat with his head in his hands. He did not seem to hear me at first as I came into the room, and when he lifted his head I was shocked at the look on his face. I had never seen him like this before, and I was appalled at the intense suffering which for a brief second was betrayed on that habitually cheerful countenance.

"Has anything gone wrong?" I asked rather tactlessly, before I had time to think. He looked at me in silence for such a long time that I began to feel uncomfortable. Then his face relaxed into the little puckered smile that I knew so well, and wrinkling his forehead he questioned me with his eyebrows arched, his head on one side, and an ironical expression in his quizzical eyes.

"Anything?"

I found myself flushing.

From being a rich man, Conrad had been reduced by the Nazi government to scraping a bare living and only a few days earlier he had been turned out of the hospital and the house attached to it which he had built for himself. All his own possessions had long since been confiscated, and it was only by a stroke of luck that the town flat had been in Clare's name and that the furniture and fittings were hers, otherwise I should doubtless have been visiting him in furnished rooms instead of in an apartment which he could at least in a sense call his own. For thirty years he had devoted his time, his energy and his fortune to the hospital which he had founded. From a small nursing home where special nervous cases were treated, it had developed into a large sanatorium for convalescents of all sorts, and the private asylum attached had acquired a world-wide reputation. He had watched it grow as he had watched the trees grow that he had planted. Always ready for some new improvement or some modern invention which would help his work, he had watched, too, over his patients more as a philosopher and guide than as a doctor. No

lame dog who came under his care ever found himself unaided when it came to the proverbial stile, and of the many poor souls admitted to his clinic stricken in mind and body through the hunting of the Gestapo, few left it without a new life or at least a new hope.

Tireless, entirely without thought for himself, endlessly patient and kind, he had worked for the love of his work, striving to lessen suffering and to ease troubled minds. It was his life, his whole life, a life well worth while. And now it was gone. Struck from his hand with a derisive gesture. No hospital, no work, no home of his own. Left, like the rest of his race, an outcast, with nothing but memories of the past and courage for the future. And I had asked him if anything had gone wrong! Absorbed by what I considered the magnitude of my worries concerning Clare and the political situation, I had never paused to think of the enormity of the loss which Conrad had suffered. He made a joke of it all, passing it off with a witty remark or a philosophical quotation, so that I had come to take it as a matter of course, a general misfortune, rather than a personal affliction. Only now, when the cheerful mask had slipped for a moment, revealing the real feelings underneath, did I recognize the extent of his suffering. It was no wonder that I reddened, for I saw clearly that I was not likely to mitigate that suffering. On the contrary, I was calmly preparing to increase his anguish almost beyond the bounds of human endurance, by depriving him, if only for a while, of the only thing that he possessed, the only thing apart from his work that he loved. As I stood facing this great little man who had stilled so much pain in his lifetime but now could find no soothing medicine for his own, I suddenly felt mean. It was in vain that I pleaded with myself that what I contemplated doing was nothing to be ashamed of, and that it was only for Clare and for her good. That was true enough, and I had never attempted to disguise my desire to get her away from Vienna. Conrad, I was sure, was perfectly aware of my intentions and apparently he bore no resentment, for I felt his affection for me to be genuine and he was certainly no hypocrite. It was not a crime, I told myself, to want your sister to be happy and to plan to get her away to a decent atmosphere, and yet I wished with all my heart that Conrad were someone else's husband, that



it were not him I had to hurt. I wished that I could look into those candid blue eyes without seeing myself reflected in them as rather a dirty dog!

"I'm sorry, Conrad," I said, forcing myself to look at him, "that was an unutterably stupid remark, and very thoughtless, but it serves you right for always making out that everything's nothing!"

"On the contrary," he said, "I am deeply concerned at the moment in trying to make 'nothing' 'everything'!"

"I wish sometimes that you hadn't quite such a command of the English language," I said. "It puts me to shame."

"Nonsense! Considering the amount of time that I have spent both in England and in the States, it would be a disgrace if I didn't know it pretty well. You, on the other hand, are quite exceptional with your idiomatic German. Many Englishmen speak accurately but few seem to grasp the spirit of the language, and there are moments when not only your expressions but the way you use them are so Viennese that I want to laugh."

"That's probably because imitation comes easily to me, but when I get to the grammar I'm stumped and I find I'm invariably using the wrong mood, not to speak of the wrong tense. And talking of moods, what is it that is *particularly* wrong just now? I'm sorry I left out the adverb the first time, but of course that was what I really meant."

Conrad tapped the blotter with his pen and gave a short sigh of resignation.

"I have a devilishly unpleasant job ahead of me," he said, "and quite honestly I was trying to summon up the courage to tackle it. It distresses me so much that I keep putting off the evil hour. However, it's got to be done some time so I suppose I'd better get on with it. I've got to sack Elsie," he added abruptly.

"Sack Elsie?" I burst out incredulously; "good God, whatever for?"

"*Zum Befehl!*" he said tersely, or as you would say: "Orders is orders!"

"Orders?" I said stupidly, still completely at sea and rather dazed by the quite astounding announcement, "but I don't quite see—I mean, who?—what?"

"You'll soon see." Conrad's voice was harder than I had ever

heard it. "Ring the bell, will you, Jeremy? I can't explain everything twice over, it's too painful, but I would like you to remain here while I talk to Elsie, it may help a little."

Silently I rang the bell, my thoughts in a whirl. A suspicion of the amazing truth flashed across my mind, only to be dismissed as utterly ridiculous. The idea of the Cahn household without Elsie was preposterous enough without going into the whys and wherefores of this major disaster. Elsie was not a servant, she was an institution. Clare had unearthed her some fourteen years earlier when she had first settled in Vienna, and it had been the discovery of her lifetime. Elsie was a Londoner born and bred, with the stout heart and inimitable humour of her kind. At the age of twenty-five she had accompanied her erstwhile mistress on a trip to Vienna, and promptly falling in love with the young baker round the corner, she had married her Hans and had settled down in the foreign capital. For three years all had gone merrily, and then disaster overtook the happy family at the bakery. Hans was run over by a van and killed, and Elsie was left to carry on as best she could with her eighteen-months-old daughter. The business proved too much for her and soon she was in service again, and so it came about that when Clare, looking around for a reliable maid to run the small flat that she and Conrad shared, first engaged the capable little cockney, it was a red letter day for them all. Since then Elsie had never left Clare, and through good days and bad, she had been the prop and stay of the Cahns to whom her devotion and that of the little girl who had grown up with them, was positively touching. It was no wonder that I was aghast at Conrad's words and that I was still grappling with their significance when Elsie herself answered the bell.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"Yes. Come in, Elsie. Sit down, will you? I want to have a word with you."

Conrad ran his hand through his thick grey hair and eased his collar from his neck. The gesture betrayed agitation, and I suddenly realized with a sinking heart that Conrad the imperturbable, the unruffled, Conrad of the iron nerves and gay courage, was rattled—badly rattled. The thought petrified me. I had come to regard the little man as unshakable. Kingdoms might rise and

kingdoms might fall but Conrad would stand steadfast through it all. With the whole world tumbling about his feet, I always pictured him a rock of strength, rallying the trembling creatures who clung to him, and with his whimsical smile restoring their confidence and sense of proportion.

Now it was *his* composure that was lacking, *his* hand that trembled as he lit his cigarette, *his* forehead that was damp with sweat. "God!" I thought, "he's weakening, it's got him down, whatever it is. But he musn't crack—he can't, he can't! If he lets go, we all go. Come on, man, hold up! Pull yourself together! You can't fail now—for your own sake, for Clare's sake—yes, for Clare's sake, get a grip, Conrad, get a grip! Hang on—hang on——"

"Elsie, I'm afraid I have some very bad news for you, and I don't quite know how to break it to you." The voice was calm, gentle, kind. Conrad's old voice. The voice of the doctor who had often to break bad news to his patients but who always managed somehow to convey that all was not lost. I gave a gasp of relief and subsided abruptly into the nearest chair. I had not, of course, uttered a sound, but I felt as if I had witnessed a wrestling match and had been shouting encouragement and backing my man for at least half an hour. My throat ached as if I had actually been yelling at the top of my voice, and now it was I who was trembling. I looked across at Conrad. He was smoking quietly, thoughtfully. Though his face was extremely grave, there was a dispassionate tranquillity and a stoical restraint in the whole set of his body that proclaimed complete self-possession and superb poise. Only the little beads of sweat were there to show that he had almost lost that control of which he was so very much the master.

"Why, Dr. Cahn, whatever's happened?" Elsie's eyes were very round and her voice was anxious.

"What's happened is that by the laws of this country I'm forced to give you notice."

"Notice? You don't mean—you can't mean that?"

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Elsie, but unfortunately I do mean it. I have no choice."

"But what have I done, sir? I mean, have I——? I—I don't understand."

"You've done nothing, Elsie, except serve us faithfully for fourteen years."

"Then why——?"

"Because I'm a Jew!"

"But, Doctor Cahn, sir, it don't make no difference, surely you know that! No one could have a better place, and what if you are a Jew? I'm sure no one could have a more considerate master. Really, it don't matter, sir!"

"Thank you, Elsie, but the sad part is that you're not allowed to choose. You see, the powers-that-be have decided that it's dangerous for an aryan woman under forty-five to remain in the household of a Jew."

"Dangerous, sir? How d'you mean?"

Conrad smiled, and this time his eyes were really twinkling.

"Well, er—if you must know, they think that I might try and seduce you!"

"Sedooce?" Elsie's jaw dropped and then she giggled. She covered her mouth with her hand and blushed scarlet.

"Oh, excuse me, doctor, I didn't ought to've laughed, but it really is ever so funny! The idea of you harming anyone! and after all you've done for me and my Katie——"

"Ah yes, Katie! That makes the situation even worse. Two females in danger, in fact!"

"Haven't they got no sense, doctor?"

"Yes, they have sense, in a way, but no sensibility."

"But you don't *really* mean that because of this—this funny idea, that I have to go? You can't mean that, sir!"

Conrad looked at Elsie steadily and his mouth was rather pinched, but his eyes were very gentle.

"I'm afraid I do mean it, Elsie," he said. "Resistance would be useless, as the Nazis always enforce their laws or else send you to a concentration camp, and as things are it will be best for you."

"But what am I to do, sir? It's not so easy with Katie. Oh, Doctor Cahn, I don't want to go! Don't make me go!"

She began to cry. Conrad took her hand in his and spoke in that quiet reassuring tone that had calmed hundreds of patients in the throes of hysteria.

"Don't cry, there's a good girl! It's so awfully hard on me and Mrs. Cahn. We'll see that you get a really good place and that where you lose one home, you'll gain another. But for us, you know, the loss is far greater, because we can never replace you. It's a very great loss, Elsie. I think you know that. Don't make it any harder by crying—please! Try and take this trouble philosophically. I've always felt that you were a courageous woman, and I'm not often wrong in sizing people up. You don't want to disappoint me, do you?"

"Oh no, sir! I *will* try. You know I'd do anything for you. But it's awfully hard. It wouldn't be so bad if you weren't so kind!"

"What d'you expect me to do? Beat you?"

Elsie smiled through her tears and by a supreme effort reduced these to a series of sniffs.

"You will have your joke, sir, won't you? whatever happens." She thought for a moment, and then brightened visibly.

"Well, there's always Sundays, isn't there?" she said.

Even Conrad did not seem to know what she quite meant by this remark, and he answered rather tentatively:

"Of course, you would be free to visit us now and then, if you felt like it."

"Visit you? Now and then!" Elsie's tears dried as if by magic as her cheeks grew red with indignation. "Why, whatever are you thinking of, doctor? Of *course* I'll come and see you as often as they lets me off, but I meant—I could always come on Sunday after lunch and help a bit—you know, with the washing and things, and when there's bottling and preserving or anything like that, because I know just how you like it!"

Conrad was deeply touched and I could see the emotion in his face and hear it in his voice as he acknowledged this further proof of Elsie's devotion.

"Thank you, Elsie," he said. "Thank you very, very much. I don't know what we have done to deserve such loyalty, but if we ever get the chance to show you our appreciation of your devoted service we shall welcome the opportunity. If I may be allowed to give you some advice, I think you would be wise to try and regain your British nationality. I think it can be done, and that would, of course, solve all your problems, though it

wouldn't solve Katie's. I think we ought to arrange to send her to England, at anyrate for a time."

"Oh, but I couldn't part with her!"

"I think you will have to. It will be far safer. Remember she's just on sixteen now, and a German subject. She's a fine strong girl and the government may insist on her being sent on the land."

"On the land? To one of those camps? My Katie? Never, while I live!"

"But you may *have* to send her. How could you prevent it?"

"But, Doctor Cahn, sir, it's impossible. Why, you know what happens to girls who go to these youth camps!"

Conrad looked at her thoughtfully and nodded his head.

"Maybe I do," he said, "but what do *you* know about it?"

"I know they go to the camps and they all come back and have babies!"

"I expect accidents are bound to happen in these big organized affairs," I chipped in, now that the conversation was on a more general topic.

"Accident twiddle-dee-dee! There's no accident, believe me, Mr. Greig."

"Oh, but surely——" I protested, "they may not be as careful with the girls as they should be, but after all——"

"It's *not* an accident, sir, I know it isn't," said Elsie stubbornly. "They needn't think they can fool me with their physical culture this and their healthy outdoor life that. *I* know. They get the poor little things away from home and take jolly good care they mix with the boys, just to get them in the family way. Want the birth-rate to go up, that's what it is—dirty, low-down animals!"

"If what you say is true, Elsie, then it's an insult to the animals," I said. "After all, they choose their mates."

"Quite right, Mr. Greig, I didn't ought to have shamed the animals! But it's true, all right, what I'm telling you. I heard it from Frau Hechenberger, and look what happened to her little niece."

"Did she have a baby?"

"Did she? Why, heavens above! It was far worse than that. It's so dreadful I hardly like to talk about it."

"You can tell me," said Conrad. "I'm a doctor, and I'm particularly interested. What happened to the Hechenberger's niece?"

"She had twins, sir, and the poor little girl only thirteen!"

"Thirteen!" I gasped. "Elsie, that can't be true. It's impossible, it's ghastly!"

"Well, I knew her, and it's the gospel truth! She lived with her parents in Graz and used to come to her auntie for the holidays, and she's often played with Katie, so I know she was only a kid."

"She died, of course?" Conrad's voice broke in with almost passionate quietness.

"Yes, sir, of course, poor little thing, though I expect it was the best thing for her in the end. The parents were that savage that they told everyone and they had her lying in state in the church with the two babies. Mrs. Hechenberger said there was the devil of a row with the Nazis and they closed the church; but it was too late, because everyone knew and the whole town turned out for the funeral. There was an awful lot of feeling about it, so maybe it'll do some good. Anyway, it'll make folks that hears of it more careful with their kids; me for one! so I guess you're right about Katie, doctor, and I'll have to send her away, though God knows it'll break my heart. Oh, Doctor Cahn, sir, *why* do they upset everything like this? Why do they treat the Jews so cruelly? I don't see no harm in them!"

"Well, you see, Elsie, like most other things, there are good Jews and bad Jews. Unfortunately here on the Continent the good ones are eclipsed by the bad ones, and I must own that the worst type of Jew is pretty awful, so I'm not altogether surprised that he is loathed. One of the worst characteristics of the race is that they *will* hoard and then take their money out of the country and invest it in some other place which they consider safer. Naturally this is not very good for business. If people make a pile of money and then skip with it they are invariably very much disliked by the inhabitants of the country which has bred them. Of course, lots of them don't do this. On the contrary, they promote art and science, found hospitals, give most generously to charity and as often as not bolster up the tottering exchequers of their countries in times of stress. But I'm afraid

these invaluable Jews are lost in a sea of miserly unscrupulous rascals that are a veritable pest to any civilization."

"Well, I suppose you know, sir, but I must say I've often been Whitechapel way myself, where to be sure you see some funny-looking people with their long hair and all (which I never think over-clean myself), but still, they're friendly enough if you give yourself the trouble to speak to them."

Conrad smiled. "Ah, but English Jews are quite another proposition," he said.

"Fancy that!" said Elsie. "I thought they were all alike—just Jews—begging your pardon, sir, and meaning no offence."

Conrad laughed outright when I told him that I thought just the same.

"Well, of course they're just Jews," he said, "only they happen to be a hundred per cent better, that's all."

"Why should they be?" I asked, deeply interested in Conrad's open-minded analysis of his own race.

"It's the treatment."

"Treatment?"

"You mean we're kinder to them?" said Elsie, as usual getting to the point half a length ahead of me.

"Yes, Elsie, that's it exactly. You see if you hound a man and take away his right of living, he becomes abnormal. Fear sharpens his wits and makes him crafty. In England the Jew is free. Every vocation is open to him and provided he leads a law-abiding life and pulls his weight he can rise to be Prime Minister. It has been proved over and over again that freedom brings out the best in a man, and the best in the Jew is recognized in England, where they are glad if he will use his brains and his ability in the service of the Empire."

"That sounds plain common sense to me," said Elsie. "I'm sure it doesn't take a Jew to feel bad with someone for ever chasing after him. Why, if you was to chivvy me, sir, from morning to night, I promise you I'd never be able to cook a thing!"

Conrad chuckled. "Well, you'd better be off, Elsie," he said, "and get on with the dinner, otherwise I *shall* start to chivvy you, now that I know your weak spot. And don't worry yourself sick over all this. We'll get something done about re-establishing



your nationality. It may take a little time; but meanwhile you and Katie had better take a holiday. Go off to the Wörthersee perhaps—I know you like bathing—that will make a break.”

“Oh, thank you, sir! It’s very good of you to think so much of us. Oh dear, we’ll *never* get a place like this again!” Elsie was getting perceptibly sniffly again, and Conrad spoke quickly before the flood had time to burst.

“*Marsch!*” he said. “Come on, quick! I want dinner on time, as I’ve got a lot of work to do this evening.”

Elsie pulled herself together and managed to produce a smile, and after automatically emptying the ash-trays and tidying the room, she went off to seek consolation in her *Knodles* and her Katie.

“Conrad,” I said as soon as she was gone, “this is simply damnable! I’m frightfully sorry. It really is too rotten, and it’s the most outrageous thing I’ve ever heard of. Fancy anyone conceiving the idea of making people get rid of their servants because they’re not of the same race! These Nazis must really be a bit unhinged.”

“No, I don’t think so, in fact in this respect they’re more consistent than usual. It’s just carrying out the system of segregation.”

“You don’t really believe that they go to these extremes in all sincerity, do you? Surely it’s just another kindling thrown on the political fire?”

“There is that, too, of course. Naturally they keep thinking of fresh things to stimulate popular imagination, but the real hate is there, and takes shape in the most fantastic forms as soon as it’s given freedom to express itself.”

“Queer thing, that hate,” I said, “it’s really very odd that it should be so universal.”

“I think it’s very natural.”

“Natural? To hate a race like that for no particular reason! You call that natural?”

“Yes, I call it almost inevitable, but it’s not a question of ‘no particular reason.’ On the contrary, I think that there’s a very definite reason.”

“That being?”

“The failure of the Chosen Race.”

Evidently I did not look as if I had grasped Conrad's meaning, and he interpreted my look correctly for he went on to try and explain more fully.

"Have you ever studied ethnology, Jeremy?" he asked.

"D'you mean melanochroi and mongoloids and those sort of things?"

He laughed. "Yes, those *sort* of things," he said, "but I meant rather more than just the headings of the race groups that you get at school. Never mind, I'll try and tell you what I mean. I was thinking of the whole evolution of the races, but not in a scientific sense so much as in a—shall I say, mystical way—or will that put you off? No? Good! Well then, think of the three races of mankind: yellow, black and white. Three is a symbolical number, you know. I always think of the yellow and black as the father and mother races and of the white as the son. The son always represents the new-born—that's obvious. Now cast your mind back to Egypt and the Israelites—the Chosen People. What were they chosen for? They were led away by Moses from a polytheistic country to the Promised Land, where they not only adopted the worship of one God according to the Law, but proceeded to carry out their mission—the mission of giving to the world the mystery of the 'son' hypothesis—the belief in *something to come*, thereby associating themselves with the white race, the new-born of mankind. The fact that the Jews did not see in Christ the Messiah for whom they were waiting, in no way detracts from the fact that Christianity owes to them not only the birth of the Lord from a member of their own race, but the whole conception of the Saviour, that Son-to-be, which is the symbol of progress. They were the Chosen People; chosen to form what Hitler would have called a New Order. They succeeded—in theory, and the Christian world put the theory into practise. Then the Jews failed. They failed because they refused to pass the baton in the relay-race of spiritual evolution. They had started it, and they were going to finish it—in their own way, alone. But it's a long race. One that lasts throughout the ages, and the Jews have never got any farther than the first lap. Now, as I remarked before, the white race is symbolical of the Son in the Trinity of the races. The Jews deny the advent of the Son. Isn't it therefore natural for those who believe in it to

associate those who don't with anti-Son—and analogically, anti-white? Here, I think, you'll find the root of that odium which to you seems inexplicable, and to me quite a reasonable and normal aversion. Hitler has traded very cleverly on this age-long rift, and has warmed up what one might almost call the 'colour' prejudice. Instead of the usual interpretation of the term white race, he has substituted the word aryan, and out of the old mystical conception of the anti-white, he has fabricated the new 'non-aryan'——"

"I'm beginning to see what you mean," I said. "It's a sort of instinctive dislike of anything which directly or indirectly opposes Christianity, which, in some roundabout way, seems to be symbolized in the white races."

"Yes, only be careful, Jeremy, how you use the word Christianity. I was never, of course, referring to religion, or to any recognized form of it. As you are well aware, one of the earliest forms of Christianity comes from Ethiopia, and if you try and connect that with the white races, you may get into a bit of a muddle! Christianity, like Mohammedanism, is—or should I say was?—a sign of spiritual expansion. We live in a world of progress and the white race has progressed more rapidly and more spectacularly than, say, the yellow, for all its fatherly wisdom, so that again you have the association of ideas. Judaism, with its obstinate refusal to move one inch from the beliefs of the Israelites, has stood still in the march of time, and has disapproved of the new-fangled ideals of the Gentiles, with the obvious result that it has become isolated in a moving world and has constituted itself an opposition. The instinctive dislike to which you refer comes, to my mind, from the fact that the people whom Hitler calls aryan, *know* that ethnologically the Jews are of the same race—that is, Caucasian—but they can't forgive them for being in a spiritual sense anti-white. If a member of any society behaves or expresses himself in a manner contrary to the beliefs or ethics of that society, he automatically ceases to become a member of it, and is usually treated as an outcast. This has always been the attitude of the world towards Jewry, and it is likely to continue so, until such a time when the Jews either conform to the rules of world society, or abstain altogether from trying to gate-crash into it.

"I'm sure they'll never do that," I exclaimed emphatically.

Conrad sighed. "They haven't learnt much in three thousand years, have they?" he said. "And yet I'm convinced that it's the only solution. Either they must separate themselves *completely*, go back to Palestine and form a new nation, stick to their old beliefs and go on standing still (that, of course, is the German idea, but to me it flavours of retrogression and defeatism) or else they must cast off Judaism for ever, realizing that their mission is already accomplished, and be prepared to merge both physically and spiritually with the rest of humanity and run with it in the third lap of the race of evolution—the lap which will pass beyond sectarian Christianity as we know it, to that greater, deeper and more united fellowship of the spirit which we all dream about, but of which we are apparently as yet not worthy."

"Well, Conrad," I said, "I don't know if you're right or not. You've obviously studied the question very carefully and I know nothing except what I've read here and there, but your theory is exceedingly interesting and appears to me very sound, and I shall certainly think about what you've said and try and learn something more about the whole problem. It's very absorbing, but I wish it weren't quite so tragic. Which reminds me of what I came to see you about, only this business with Elsie put it clean out of my head. What can I do to help?"

"Who, or what, my dear Jeremy?"

"All your Austrian friends—Jews or Gentiles, it's all the same to me!"

"D'you mean moral support, encouraging them and cheering them up?"

"Good heavens, no! I mean something practical."

"But my dear chap, you're not a rich man, and it would take a millionaire to help most of my friends!"

"Surely there are other kinds of help apart from financial? Couldn't I help some of them to get their visas and that sort of thing, or smuggle things for them over the frontier? I'm sure I could do something."

Conrad looked at me with some astonishment, and then he remarked flippantly:

"Are you fancying yourself as Sir Percy Blakeney number two, or what?"

"Nothing so flattering," I replied, "but as it happens, I'm serious. I'm sick of seeing all these poor people bullied and persecuted, and I feel that I can't sit here smugly with a British passport and a car and do nothing about it. I'd feel better if I could only help *one* unfortunate out of this hell."

"D'you mean that, Jeremy?"

"Of course I do! Wouldn't you if you were me?"

He nodded. "Let me think," he said, and I watched him in silence for quite five minutes while he ran his eye over his case-book and made some notes. Then he looked up at me and smiled.

"You could do a lot, I think," he said, "if you don't mind taking the risk, but you'll have the Gestapo after you in no time. I suppose you realize that?"

"I must be careful, that's all. Dash it, they can't do anything to me unless they actually catch me breaking their laws!"

"I'd rather you didn't count on that. Your Embassy would, of course, take the matter up *after* you had disappeared, but that wouldn't help you much, nor us!"

"Don't worry, Conrad, I promise not to become one of Mas-kelyn's mysteries! but tell me what I can do."

"I must have time to think it out," he said. "I have three or four people in mind whom I believe you could help enormously but I must see first what would be the best way. Could you come round in the morning, and we could discuss ways and means?"

"Yes, of course. I couldn't this evening, anyhow, because there wouldn't be time. Clare should be in any minute now, and we're dining and playing bridge with the Oppersdorfs."

"So you are! I'd forgotten. I'm glad of that, because she'll be in an awful state about Elsie, and it may take her mind off it a bit."

"Are you going to tell her to-night?" I asked, my heart sinking at the thought of the shock in store for Clare.

"I'm not going to tell her at all. I can't. Elsie will do it for me."

I nodded. "I see," I said, "yes, better that way. Well, I think I'll just slip over to the hotel and change. Will you tell Clare that I'll fetch her about eight?"

"All right." Conrad gave me one of his dry little smiles.

"You skip, my lad. She'll be over the worst by the time you come back!"

I blushed furiously. "Blast you!" I said, "how the devil d'you always know what one is thinking? It's most disconcerting."

"For one thing, it's my job, and for another, I was just wondering myself if I couldn't disappear into the bathroom for an hour or two!"

"You could, but you won't. You'll stay with Clare because she'll need you."

He looked at me. "Maybe," he said, and there was such a wealth of meaning and such infinite sadness in that one word that I beat a precipitous retreat and did not draw breath until I had run down the three flights of stairs and was alone on the pavement outside the house.

## CHAPTER IV

*Wer nicht liebt Weim, Weib und Gesang,  
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Lebenlang.*

GOETHE

ABOUT an hour later I strolled out of my hotel near the Graben and walked down the Singerstrasse. It was a lovely summer evening and the streets were fairly full, but even so I had no difficulty in spotting Conrad some hundred yards ahead of me as he turned out of the doorway of No. 22 and moved off in the opposite direction.

He had hardly gone more than a dozen yards when he was stopped by two brown-shirted Nazis. They evidently questioned him, for I saw him take something out of his pocket and show it to them. At this they promptly seized him roughly by the arm, and my heart missed several beats as the thought rushed through my brain that they were arresting him. I broke into a run but checked myself almost at once, as the need for caution made itself clear to my panic-stricken mind. Conrad was arguing with the two men, or at least it seemed so, for they were listening to what he was saying, and as I approached I saw one of them let go his arm and give him a push, while the other shouted loud enough for me to hear: "All right, only hurry up! we aren't going to wait here all night."

Conrad walked slowly back to the doorway of the flat. By this time I was almost level with him and I was just going to speak to him when he gave an almost imperceptible shake of the head and went in without looking in my direction. Taking my cue from this, I walked on beyond the flat and joined the small crowd which had now collected round the S.A. men. These were a typical product of the breed: young, arrogant, and anxious to show off, and in a few moments I was fully informed as to what was taking place as they were only too glad to enlighten the onlookers.

Conrad, it seemed, had been requisitioned by them to sweep the street. The younger of the two pointed to a pile of rubbish,

cigarette ends, and manure that had collected in the roadway and the gutter, and said with a grin:

"Why should we have to put up with this litter when there is a dirty pig of a Jew to clean it up for us?"

"That's right," cried a pimply youth of about fifteen; "make the swine work, it'll be good for his figure!" and he tittered maliciously. The majority of the crowd said nothing and a few of the older people walked quietly away. An aggressive-looking woman with a mottled-red face and a mottled-red *dierndl* wanted to know where Conrad had gone and why they were waiting.

"He's gone to change his clothes," explained the elder of the storm-troopers.

"Afraid of soiling them by doing honest work, I suppose," said the pimply youth striking an attitude. The Nazi made haste to explain the unaccountable leniency on his part by telling them that Conrad was a doctor on his way to the hospital and that there was some question as to the advisability of letting him go with dirty clothes since he had to pass by the beds of several aryan patients in order to attend to his lousy fellow-Jews.

I smiled to myself as I recognized the form of Conrad's argument, but it faded quickly as I suddenly realized the awful humiliation to which my friend was about to be subjected. They were going to make him clean the street! He would have to stoop and clear up the filth with his hands in front of this jeering, mocking crowd. "God!" I thought, "this is frightful! What can I do?" I wanted to take to my heels and hide somewhere, anywhere, to get away from those maddening, grinning, expectant faces! Then suddenly I knew, of course, that I must help him. Obviously that was the thing to do. Whatever they made him do, I'd do it, too. They would want to know who I was, and I'd say that I was a reporter. Perhaps that would frighten them. They didn't like things in the foreign Press. Yes, that was it! Perhaps I could stop it after all——

I was just working out what I was going to say when my thoughts were arrested by the sight of a smart-looking officer emerging from the portico of the building where the Cahns lived. I registered surprise that he was wearing the sky-blue tunic of a pre-war Austrian regiment and that two rows of decorations blazed across his chest. I was puzzled because there was some-



thing familiar about the man and I was sure that I had seen him before somewhere. He walked briskly through the crowd, who also gazed at him with curiosity, and then to my further astonishment he halted in front of the two S.A. men and gave them a very condescending salute.

I gaped. I stared incredulously. I gave a gasp. The round cherubic face above the braided collar and the twinkling blue eyes beneath the high-crowned military cap, belonged to Conrad!

Before I could recover from my speechless amazement or the crowd or the Nazis had grasped the situation, he produced a brush and a dustpan from under his arm with a flourish, and was already kneeling in the gutter, attacking the cigarette ends with vigour while his sword clattered and banged against the kerb. In a trice I was beside him. Peeling off my dinner jacket I blessed the conservative convention which encourages an Englishman, even when abroad, to don a boiled shirt when dining at a private house, for I felt that my pearl studs and impeccable Savile Row waistcoat were adding the finishing touch to a fantastic tableau, the thought of which was already delighting my heart.

For a moment the two Nazis seemed paralysed and then they both burst out simultaneously with a flood of abuse, demanding in the same breath what was the idea of such a masquerade and who the devil I was. Conrad made no reply and went on with his sweeping, and I remarked in an offhand manner without looking up: "Oh, I'm a war veteran too!" There was a murmur from the crowd and an elderly man detached himself from it and seized the dustpan out of Conrad's hand.

"You give that to me, *Herr Major*," he said. "It's an outrage!"

"Don't you interfere!" shouted the senior storm trooper, his face purple with rage. "The man's a Jew, and he'll do as I blasted well tell him! and what's more, I'll arrest any one of you who dares to try and stop him."

"I don't care if he's a Jew or an aborigine!" yelled the little old man equally angry. "I'm not going to have *my* regiment insulted!"

Conrad stood up and put a restraining hand on the arm which was by now brandishing the dustpan threateningly in the Nazi's face.

"Don't upset yourself, my friend," he said. "I can assure you that the honour of our regiment has never been stained by nature's dirt! We had grubbier jobs to do than this in the field, didn't we?"

The screech of brakes applied violently drowned both the voice of Conrad's comrade-in-arms and that of the infuriated Nazi. All heads turned in the direction of the sound and a sudden hush fell over the scene as a tall, grey-haired German officer sprang out of the car which he had pulled up so suddenly.

"What's all this? What's going on here?" he demanded in a sharp, authoritative voice. "I'm not speaking to you," he added, as the S.A. man started to explain.

"I was sweeping up the refuse, *Herr Oberst*," replied Conrad sweetly in reply to the look that was addressed to him, "at the orders of these gentlemen here." He indicated the brown-shirts with a wave of his hand. "I must add in their defence," he continued, observing the German's expression, "that I am a Jew!"

The Colonel looked down at Conrad from his six feet odd and in silence his eyes travelled from the ribbon of the Maria Theresa along the lines and back again to the Order of the Iron Cross 1st Class, hanging from the buttonhole of the tunic.

"I see," he said in an icy voice, and as he transferred his gaze to the two Nazis they blenched under the look he gave them.

"May I ask," he said, addressing Conrad politely, "how you happen to be in this uniform?"

Conrad explained who he was and about going to the hospital.

"I was unwilling to get my suit dusty," he said, "for fear of infecting my patients—I have some surgical cases. I was very kindly allowed to go and change, but unfortunately my other suit is at the cleaner's. You are no doubt aware that people of my race are not permitted to retain a wardrobe, and so I had to choose between my old uniform and my bathing drawers!"

The colonel's moustache twitched, but whether it was from amusement or from anger I never knew, for he turned rather abruptly to me and asked me who I was.

"I am a British officer," I replied quietly. This was true in a way, for I had held a commission in the war and was second-in-command of my Territorial battalion in India.

Anyway the effect was electric. The German swore under his breath, the Nazis turned if anything a shade greener, and the little old man exclaimed: "*Jesus, Maria, Josef!* what a scandal!"

"Where d'you live?" the Colonel asked Conrad.

"Just here," he replied, pointing to the house.

"Oh, do you? Well, if you care to—er—change back again, I'll drop you at the hospital, and meanwhile I'll deal with *these*," he said viciously, glaring at the now thoroughly discomfited Nazis. "And you, sir," he added in perfect English, "no doubt have an engagement?"

"I have," I said cheerfully, "and if you'll excuse me I'll go and brush the dust off my trousers or my hostess may ask me what I've been doing, and I think it would be a pity to tell her, don't you?"

"If you care to add discretion to your valour, it will indeed be the better part of your evening's work," he said.

I looked at him sharply.

"You've been in England? You speak remarkably good English."

He gave a little smile. "I went to school there, and then on to Oxford!"

Good Lord, I thought, what a queer world it is! There doesn't seem to be any happy medium in this country. Either it's a concentration camp or Commem. week!

I thanked the colonel for what he had done, but he would not let me finish.

"It's I who must thank you," he said. "These upstarts here don't know the difference between uniform and fancy dress! But two of them, at anyrate, will know in future. I boxed for my college," he added, apparently irrelevantly.

"Good for you," I said grinning. "Well, I hope that you'll remember my trousers when you start demonstrating!"

"I will," he said, "don't worry. Good night."

"Good night," I replied, and as he saluted I waved my hand, since I had no hat. At the corner I looked back and saw him towering above the two S.A. men, notebook in hand. The crowd had melted completely away. Only the old soldier remained, and he was busy parking the Colonel's car tidily at the side of the pavement. I watched him until I saw the wheels flatten the pile

of rubbish that Conrad and I had been at such pains to brush into a neat little heap, and then I left him to it.

I walked into the garage where I kept my car and spoke to the night-watchman who had just come on duty, telling him that I should be late.

"That's all right, sir," he said, "I'll keep a place free near the door so that you can drive straight in. Thank you, sir," he added as I slipped a couple of marks into his palm after he had finished brushing me down, "it's quite like old times to have an English customer again!"

I paused. "What difference does the nationality make? The garage is absolutely packed. There's hardly room for a motor-bike!"

He snorted. "Yes," he said, "packed with Opels and Steyr roo's! D'you think it's any fun washing and greasing them? Where's the Hispanos, the Packards, the Rolls-Royces, the Isottas? Where's all the chauffeurs that we used to have a cup of coffee with? Where's the crack motorists with their super-charged cars that took pleasure in showing you all the latest gadgets? Where's the elegant ladies that used to smile and say 'thank you' when you opened the door for them? This used to be a well-known international garage, and mine was a job to be envied. Why, I've wiped windscreens belonging to some of the most famous people in Europe! Now," he said disgustedly, "now, it's just a doss-house for the family wagonettes of the Party-members!"

"Well," I said, amused at this disclosure of class distinction amongst motor cars, "you must be pretty bored at having to clean my car then, for it's only a very ordinary Ford V8."

"Oh," he replied quickly, "that's quite another matter. It's always a pleasure to wash even a tri-car for the *Herrschaften*."

As I manœuvred the Ford out of its "box," I pondered over the profundity of this philosophy. Here was a man who liked to work for the "gentry." Was it a form of snobbery? I thought not; and decided that it was probably the reaction of the average Austrian who, with his inborn gift of good manners, dislikes anything ill-bred. The Party-members, evidently, were not conspicuous for their courtesy, nor apparently, for their generosity! I asked him with a wink what he thought of the idea of the new

"people's car." The answer was a profanity. "But I'm an old man," he added, "and with any luck I'll be dead before it comes into circulation."

"With any luck," I remarked, "you'll live to see fifty foreign number-plates in here again."

"God grant it!" he said, so fervently that I felt a pang as I realized how unlikely it was that God would be able to grant him anything so simple.

It was nearly nine by the time Clare and I drove up to the Oppersdorfs' house on the Hohe Warte. Luckily we had been asked for eight-thirty, so we were not unpardonably late by English standards, and quite punctual according to Austrian ones.

On the walnut dining-table beautiful Biedermayer glass and fine old family silver reflected the mellow glow of candle-light, but the ancestors on the walls looked out of their frames in mild surprise to see the chatelaine ladelling out the soup herself from the crested tureen on the table, and the eleventh baron, late A.D.C. to the Emperor Franz-Josef, was distinctly perturbed to observe from his commanding position over the mantelpiece, the twelfth baron, his son, helping his guests to peas. He resumed his rather smug expression, however, when he saw that some of the Tokay which he had himself laid down was being drunk with appreciation by the Englishman on Stephanie's right (that lanky sunburnt creature must surely be an Englishman?) The eleventh baron would have been a good deal more concerned had he realized that what stood on the dining-table and on the side-board was about all of what was left of the vast family possessions which he had inherited and passed on to his son. The lean years after the war had devoured most of the liquid assets and since then the valuable ancestral treasures had been passing in a steady flow through the hands of dealers to the other side of the Atlantic.

This was not all. Hugo von Oppersdorf had flatly refused to join the National Socialist party, and it was only the influence of an old friend who had some pull with the *Gauleiter* of Vienna that had kept him out of Dachau, for he had been in the Ministry of Finance in the Dollfus days and was known to have been an ardent supporter of the little Chancellor. Now, of course, relieved of his position, he was obliged to fall back on the meagre

pension of a cavalry officer, and it seemed to him that however much he squeezed and pinched the proverbial ends remained obstinately divorced.

Stephanie, his wife, was a Pole. An extremely handsome woman, she kept her fine dark eyes continuously turned towards her son Kari, who was the apple of them. The look she gave him was full of anxiety, and presently when we were having coffee on the terrace overlooking the garden, she told me what was worrying her. The young man, it appeared, was a mechanic (much to his father's horror, but as Kari explained, what was the use of being a good horseman when almost all the regiments were mechanized?). Skilled workmen were much in demand in Germany and Baroness Oppendorf was terrified lest her ewelamb be whisked off to make aeroplane parts in some remote part of the Reich.

"And then there is the war," she said, in such a fatalistic tone that I stiffened.

"What d'you mean, the war?"

"It will come, of course," she replied in a hopelessly resigned voice, "if not this year, then next. And that is why he must get away; he *must*!" she added vehemently.

"You mean that you wouldn't want him to fight?"

"I mean that I don't intend any son of mine to spill his blood in the service of his natural enemies. His forefathers on both sides have always fought the Germans, and if it is God's will, why then he must do the same, but he'll never fight *for* them, never! if I have to shoot him myself to prevent it!"

I looked at her with admiration. It was well known that she adored this boy with passionate intensity, and yet here she was calmly prepared to sacrifice him on the altar of patriotism. How like a Pole! I thought; there is something fanatical in their hatred of the Germans. My God! it will be awful if there's a war. But there isn't going to be one. Or is there? Oh! damn all these people who *will* talk about it! I must get off the subject. What was it the Baroness had said? Kari must get away. Well, surely that was easy enough. Hadn't he relations in Poland? But apparently it was not as easy as all that. How was he to get a visa? The authorities would never grant him an exit permit to Poland, or the U.S.S.R. so he would have to go to Paris, and

if necessary on from there. The family had relations in France and they would look after him until he could stand on his own feet, but how was he to get there? It was almost an impossibility to get a French visa unless you had business relations or some influence. This, I thought, is where I come in! It's like an answer to a maiden's prayer! I've been screaming to help, and now all I have to do is to get Kari to Paris.

"Listen," I said to my hostess, "don't let's play bridge; let's talk this over. I'm sure there is some way in which I can get your boy to France."

Then they all spoke at once! Everyone had ideas, everyone had advice. In the end, oddly enough, it was my own suggestion which carried the day, or rather, the night.

Kari was to leave the workshop at once and enter my service as a chauffeur. I was to try and secure the elusive visa for him to accompany me in that capacity to France. What happened then was a bit vague, but we all felt that once he was on French soil everything would be all right. The thing was to get him there, and I felt in a queer way strangely confident that I would succeed in doing so. The whole party was elated. The young man himself was most enthusiastic, and I could tell from the expression on his parents' face that the mere idea of anyone suggesting anything concrete had brought them a new hope, and with it a momentary lifting of their fears.

It was, I felt, a momentous decision and I made up my mind that it should be duly celebrated and everyone's spirits kept up, quite apart from the fact that I realized that the more of a night we made of it the less chance Clare had to brood over her own worries. My suggestion therefore to go to Grinzing was received with cheers, and soon we were packed in the car and trundling along to one of Vienna's famous *Weinstube*.

It was not, of course, the season of the *Heurigen*, or new wine, but in a way this was an advantage, for the little inn was not crowded with tourists, and the few locals gave it a more homely atmosphere. As we entered the garden the head waiter gave an ostentatious "*Heil Hitler*," but I managed to keep my head and answered him in my best English.

"Good evening, can I have a table for five?" I asked him, speaking for the whole party.

"Certainly, sir," he replied with a faultless American accent. "I have a very nice table in the corner," and he proceeded to conduct us past several tables where the swastika was conspicuous in the occupants' buttonholes, to a secluded arbour covered with vines. Here, well out of earshot of the other guests, the waiter suddenly became completely transformed.

"*Kuss-die-Hand, Frau Baronin,*" he beamed, arranging a chair for her. "*G'ten Abend, Herr Baron, Ach! Frau Doctor,*" he said to Clare paternally, "what a long time it is since you were here! And the Professor? Well, I trust?"

"Well, and working as usual, or he'd be here," I answered in German.

The man looked at me searchingly for a moment and then he spoke in his own language.

"I am sorry, sir, I did not recognize you immediately, but now, of course, I remember. You were here with two other English gentlemen. But surely it was three or four years ago?"

"Good heavens!" I said, "how on earth d'you remember? It's quite five years ago!"

He smiled. "I have a good memory for faces," he said, "and a better one for voices. And now, what shall I bring the *Herrschaften*? Have you dined?"

"Yes. We want something to cheer us up! *Herr Ober*, have you any caviare left?"

"Only in tins, sir, but we have a few still and it is first-class stuff."

"All right, bring a really good portion each and plenty of hot toast, and we'd better have some *Gumpoldskirchner* to go with it, but you must let the Baron choose; he knows more about it than I do."

While Hugo and the head waiter were busy with the wine list, the little orchestra, consisting of piano and fiddle, slipped from a popular movie hit (which, incidentally, they had been playing exceptionally well) into a typical Viennese song. As they played the refrain for the second time, Clare began humming it softly. Low though she kept her voice, it reached the sharp ears of the violinist who evidently recognized the quality of the tone, for in a few strides he was beside her and playing for her alone. The engaging little air was irresistible and soon Clare was singing it



with all the charm and talent that had delighted even the critics at many gatherings of the musical world in Vienna. A hush descended over the small garden and in a few moments all heads were turned towards our table, and when the song was ended enthusiastic applause showed how much the other guests had enjoyed the reminder of happier days when it was a common occurrence for some of the best opera singers in the world to entertain them gratis in the gardens of Grinzing.

One song followed another. Young Oppersdorf, who had a fine natural baritone voice, joined in, and soon the whole audience was singing. As is the way with the Germanic races, they sing well. Never off the note and completely conversant with anything that the violinist was inspired to play, they constituted themselves a chorus, letting Clare sing a verse solo and then lead them in the refrain. The burst of music was like a signal. Either the passers-by had been arrested by the singing or else word had gone round the district, for before midnight the garden was packed to overflowing and everyone in the gayest of spirits. I ordered wine for the musicians, and sensing that the atmosphere was right for a friendly gesture, told the proprietor to place a *viertel* in front of every guest. The band at once broke into the German equivalent of "For he's a jolly good fellow" and as they reached the "three times *Hoch!*" all raised their glasses to me. I waved a response and started to whistle the only tune of which, being distinctly unmusical, I was reasonably sure, but nevertheless *O du Lieber Augustin* brought the house down, and in a few minutes we had all linked arms and were swaying rhythmically to the old favourite. There was no doubt about it the party was a success. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, and for once there was none of that restraint which had become so very marked amongst a crowd since the advent of the Greater Germans.

It was after two when at last we left the *Weinstube*. We were played out by the band, bowed out by the proprietor and the head waiter, both wreathed in smiles, and waved out by the company in general to a chorus of "*Prosits*." I noticed that there was not a single "Heil Hitler" to speed us on our way.

Baroness Oppersdorf looked ten years younger, her husband was humming the opening bars of a regimental march over and

over again, Kari was happily bottled, and Clare, flushed with the success of the evening, looked so radiant that I nearly creashed into the back of a tram trying to watch her in the mirror of the car.

We dropped the Oppersdorfs and I promised to get busy first thing in the morning with the proposed plans for Kari, while we thanked each other in turn for what was to me at anyrate an unforgettable evening.

"You're going the wrong way, Jug," said Clare as I turned right instead of left in the Nüssdorferstrasse.

"That," I said, "depends upon where you are going!"

"Oh!" was all she said, which of course you could take any way you liked, and which I interpreted to my entire satisfaction.

We neither of us spoke as the car began to climb and zigzag its way up to Cobenzl. We did not speak either as we leant on the balustrade of the terrace and looked down at the sight below us. It was a perfect summer night and the moon was up, so that the many famous buildings were clearly outlined at our feet. The thousands of twinkling lights and the moonlit haze made it appear an enchanted city. I looked at the lovely scene and felt a lump come into my throat. It was indeed an enchanted city; for a very very wicked fairy had cast a very very evil spell on it and had turned the sleeping beauty into an exceptionally ugly beast.

"What are you thinking about?" Clare held my hand tightly and drew her wrap more closely round her though the night was quite warm. I told her. She nodded her head in silence.

"It's not a very nice fairy story, is it?" she said, "but I often thought some of them rather frightening as a child, only of course I always knew that in the end everything would come out all right."

"This is going to come out all right, too," I told her. "There'll be a happy ending, one day. The wicked fairy always comes to a sticky end, and a Prince Charming is bound to turn up. He *must*," I added savagely, "it can't go on like this for ever!"

"No, it can't, can it? Jug, d'you think we shall ever dance in a New Year at the *Opernball* to the 'Blue Danube' again?"

"I wonder!"

We were still wondering as we coasted silently down the hill again into what had once been the capital of Austria.

## CHAPTER V

*Freedom! An English subject's sole prerogative!*

DRYDEN

AT ten to nine next morning, true to my promise to the Oppersdorfs and in spite of a slight hang-over, I sallied forth on my quest of a visa for Kari. As I turned right out of the Kohlmarkt I observed a queue at least a hundred yards long of weary, patient refugees who had been already waiting several hours for the Consulate to open. Some, at the head of the long line, had been there all night. As I walked past them I thought of all the stories that I had heard and which had been current in Vienna for twelve months or more. At one time, it appeared, the Nazis had been in the habit of commandeering the Jews for menial work after they had stood all night or longer and were nearing the magic doorway which was their objective. This amusing pastime was stopped by the British officials, who declared that applicants for visas were to all intents and purposes on British soil since the only reason that they were not actually within the consular precincts was because the lobby could not accommodate them all. Be this as it may, for the time being the queues were unmolested until the Nazis had thought of another and better way of tormenting the wretched emigrants. One morning, so the story goes, a body of S.S. men passed down the line of would-be travellers inspecting their passports, and having discovered that only a small percentage of the waiting people were arians, they separated these from the rest of the crowd regardless of their place in the queue and the protests of all concerned and insisted on their forming another line close to the consulate door, declaring that it was an insult to their race that they should have to stand shoulder to shoulder with the scum of the earth. All this reorganization had not, as can be imagined, taken place without some noise and commotion, and one of the passport officials looking out from an upper window and observing the hubbub, sent the porter to enquire what it was all about. He was soon enlightened, and his reaction was

both prompt and characteristic. "That's all right," he said to the porter, "see that the Jewish queue takes precedence over the other!"

There were many rumours as to the somewhat startling sequels to this story, but whether it or they represent the entire truth or only a portion of it, one thing was certain, from then on the belief prevalent amongst the refugees that if they applied for help to Britain they were more than likely to get it, was strengthened. I must say that my personal experience bore this out, for on the many and varied occasions when I had dealings with several British consulates, I never ceased to be amazed at the unfailing patience, courtesy and kindness with which the staff listened to the long rambling tales of woe that were their daily portion, and I noticed how frequently they overstepped their duties in order to give their personal help (when the official one was unavailing) to the endless stream of unfortunates who came begging for it.

The door of this particular Consulate-General, now reduced to provincial status but doing work of more than national importance, was just opening as I drew abreast of it, but the surge of waiting refugees was such that it completely blocked all access and I tried in vain to force my way politely through it. I waited on the outskirts of the crowd while those composing it besieged the porter with entreaties, either to let them in or to give them a ticket for the following day. Quietly but firmly he dealt with them each in turn, and after he had let the first lucky batch pass into the sanctuary beyond and had tidied the head of the queue once more, I was able to get within speaking distance. Leaning forward over the heads of the clamouring applicants I managed to push my passport under his nose. In an instant he had forced a passage for me and slipped me through the door.

"What d'you want, sir?"

"To speak to the Consul."

He looked immensely relieved.

"First floor, sir. I dunno if he's here yet, but I know the Vice-Consul's up there."

"Thanks," I said, and as I walked up the broad staircase and reached the first floor, I could see masses of people packed on

the landing above waiting their turn to get into the Passport Office.

A minute later the Vice-Consul was asking me what he could do for me. I told him. I said that I had an Austrian chauffeur and that I wanted him to drive my car back to Paris, and did he think it would be possible for me to get a French visa for him. He said that it was difficult, but that as I was a personal friend of the Consul's he could give me a letter of recommendation to the French Consul-General asking him to do all he could. Would that be any use? I said it would, and when could I have it? I was told the same afternoon, any time after two o'clock. After expressing my thanks I was turning away when I paused for a moment to listen to a conversation which arrested my attention. A woman was explaining a long and obviously hopeless case with many gesticulations, and the Vice-Consul gave her some addresses which he said might be useful to her. When she had left, a younger official who had heard the dissertation raised a questioning eyebrow and said:

"She'll never get him out, will she?"

"Shouldn't think there was a hope."

"But you sent her to R——?"

"Well, I couldn't tell her there was nothing to be done, could I? Besides he's always very good about these cases, and he may be able to get the man food or medical supplies. Anyway, if it's hopeless it'll let her down a bit more gently."

It was obvious that the man in question was ill in a concentration camp and I supposed that either he or his wife had English connections, but when I asked if this were so I was told that they had none.

"What on earth did she come here for?" I asked.

"To try and get us to do something for her husband."

"But what's that got to do with the British Consulate?"

"Nothing!"

"Good lord! Does this sort of thing happen often?"

"Most days."

"I see." As I walked down the staircase I fingered my dark blue passport with its Royal coat-of-arms. I looked at it thoughtfully with a new feeling of respect and security, and as I read the formal wording of the introduction: "and to afford him every

assistance and protection of which he may stand in need——” the words suddenly took on a deeper significance. Pushing my way again through the ever-thickening crowd I shuddered to think what it must be like to stand there with an ugly brown booklet clasped in a trembling hand. “How fantastic it is,” I thought, “after all they are only bits of paper, these passports, and yet even in their covers they’re symbolical for on one there are letters of gold, and the other is the colour of mud!”

When I burst in on Conrad a few minutes later to keep my appointment with him, I was full of the morning’s work and of my new-laid plans. He nodded his head in approval as I explained what I proposed to do and suggested that an injury to one of my limbs would lend colour to my story and might convince the frontier guards that I was really in need of a chauffeur in case they should raise difficulties.

“That’s all very well, and I expect you’re right, but I don’t see myself breaking an arm or a leg just for the occasion, and a trumped-up injury might be dangerous.”

“I could put your foot in plaster-of-paris, if you like. It would take a brave customs officer or guard to break that down on a foreigner on whom there is as *yet* no suspicion!”

“By jove, that’s a good idea, Conrad. You’re a genius! And I needn’t pretend to have a broken ankle; a bad sprain is quite sufficient justification. This is simply splendid. Look here, why should I wait for the journey to get into the plaster? Let me go to the French Consulate with it and it may facilitate my getting the visa.”

“No scruples?”

“None whatever! After all, it’s in a good cause, and anyway the only thing the French mind is being landed with an *émigré* who can’t support himself. That won’t happen in Kari’s case as he has relations and as he’ll only use France as a jumping-off place to get to Poland. I shouldn’t try and deceive the British Consulate, because they must be able to trust their own nationals, but there’s no necessity there—I didn’t say *why* I wanted a chauffeur and they’re much too intelligent to ask! All I said was that I would guarantee that Kari wouldn’t remain in France, and that’s the only pledge I have to see fulfilled for them to vouch for my integrity.”

"Your argument is excellent, my dear Jeremy, and one might almost imagine that you had been brought up in a Jesuit College instead of at an English public school!"

"Dammit, you've got to use a bit of guile if you're going to put one across these blasted Nazis!"

"You have indeed! and you'll need more of it if you want to help their victims successfully. I'm not criticizing, but I'm always interested when a creature of habit changes his methods. An Englishman is slow to drop the direct line of attack and resort to subtlety, but when he *does*, I must say that he gives his mind to it and—what's the expression?—oh, yes, goes the whole hog! A very satisfactory idiom, that!"

"Well, what about it? I mean, when do I sprain the ankle?"

"That's for you to say. After all, you're the criminal. I'm only the accomplice."

"Well, I thought of going to the French Consulate first thing in the morning. I have to fetch my letter of introduction this afternoon and it's no good trying to get into any passport office an hour or two before closing time."

"Then you'll have to be up bright and early. Come round here at 7.30 the latest, and I'll fix your foot right away, and then you can have breakfast with us and start off on your adventures. By the way, what size shoes d'you take?"

"Forty-one, why?"

"I must get you a felt boot with an iron to wear over the plaster otherwise you won't be able to walk at all."

"Oh, I know the things! You always see someone hopping about in them at winter-sports places. Pretty snappy! I shall *really* be a cripple, though it's going to be an infernal nuisance. I'd better get everything I can done to-day while I can still run around. I want to get the engine of the car overhauled. The valves need grinding, and if she's got to do several long runs she'd better be in good trim. They can start on her tomorrow and if all goes well I'd like to get away on Saturday. Well, that's settled. Those are my plans. Now what about yours? Any bright ideas for the Scarlet Pimpernel?"

"Not so much ideas, but plenty of things that want doing. The thing is, can you do them?"

"Oh, so plots are hatching, are they? Let's hear."

"I've thought of several minor ways in which you could help, but my two major preoccupations are the Arnheim and the Schallnitz families."

"You'll never get Arnheim away, surely?"

"I won't, but perhaps you will!"

"Good heavens! how?"

"We'll go into that when the time comes, but meanwhile it's a question of his wife and child and also of money. Chiefly money."

"I can't do a great deal there, I'm afraid. A hundred perhaps—but even that won't get three of them far."

"They've got the money. It's only a question of getting it out."

"But even if I could get it out, would they be able to change it? Any large amount, I mean."

"You can always change Bank of England notes!"

I whistled. "Has he got some sterling tucked away?"

Conrad nodded. "Five hundred pounds."

"Jingo! They could all get to the States on that—I see, you want me to smuggle the money out, and then they'll be one stage farther on."

"Exactly. D'you think you could?"

"Of course."

"Is it as easy as all that?"

"It's only a question of hiding it on the car. One must be able to think of a place where they wouldn't dream of looking. Great Scot! I believe I've got it!"

"What?"

"The hidey-hole. Round my foot, under the plaster!"

Conrad looked at me solemnly and then he started to smile. Gradually the smile spread to a grin, and he laughed delightedly.

"Jeremy, you're certainly the man for the job. That's a superb idea. I can easily wrap the notes in oilsilk and put them between two layers of plaster so that even by intent or accident it would be very unlikely that they would be spotted. This is simply grand. I feel quite excited! I should have preferred the money in Switzerland but I suppose you could send it from France quite safely?"

"Lord, yes. I can arrange all that. I'll do the deal myself and have the francs transferred to the Credit Suisse."



"Whatever you do, you mustn't change the notes at a frontier town. The places are riddled with spies and there's an informer in almost every bank."

"If you'd rather, I could come back via Switzerland and deposit the cash there, either in a bank, or perhaps with someone the Arnheims know?"

"Yes, that would be splendid. It seems too good to be true. I'll get the money from his wife tonight, but I don't think we'll tell her anything until the whole thing's a *fait accompli*. I'll just say that there *might* be a chance of getting it over and that I must have it handy in case there's an opportunity."

"All right, that's fixed, then, and you'll give me all the particulars before I leave. And now what about the Schallnitz?"

"Well, it's something of the same sort, only she hasn't got any money, but she's got some valuables that she'd give her soul to get to England."

"Nothing when you say it quickly! I suppose you want me to put on a balldress and drive through the customs with a tiara on my head and a parure round my neck!"

"I think you're a bit tall for the part, though I know that there are lots of huge Englishwomen. Still, I feel that six foot—how much is it?"

"Six one and a half in my socks."

"Six one and a half in the socks, then, is just a *little* conspicuous in a ball dress, even if you could find the passport to go with it!"

"Well, what d'you want me to do? Pick the stones out and vulcanize them into the tyres?"

"I've heard of worse suggestions! but as a matter of fact it isn't a case of jewels at all. It's furs and a valuable stamp collection."

"How about having my tweed coat lined with chinchilla?"

"For one thing they're sables; for another it's midsummer."

"H'm, not so good; but look here, joking apart what's the woman got exactly and what does she want done with it?"

"She wants to get two fur coats and some silver foxes over to England. She has friends there who have guaranteed her and she's getting her visa, but she must have a little ready cash to help her with her career. She's the singer, you know, and she has great talent and should get on. I expect you remember her

husband was killed in a ski-ing accident a few years ago? Well, she's a Jewess, of course, and as you know they're not allowed to take more than one tiny suitcase out of the country, and Emmi says she *must* have her clothes and it's no use her leaving without them. An old friend of ours has hidden most of her things and she's told the Gestapo that she sold her furs last time she was in England. Naturally they don't believe her and they'll watch her like a lynx, but I thought if she could only get them away and sell the stamps (which Clare's got by the same token), it would give her a start."

"Couldn't one send a trunk 'advanced luggage'? Under another name obviously."

"You have to fill up endless forms and give innumerable particulars and I'm afraid the customs here in Wien who examine all the luggage would be sure to smell a rat."

"Then why couldn't it go from some other place? And I think it should belong, ostensibly, to an Englishwoman—someone we know who'd agree to having her name used—or, wait a bit, better still, someone who's *left a trunk behind* and wants it sent home."

"Yes, but who?"

"Naturally someone who comes regularly to Austria and is well known in a particular town. I know! Of course—winter sports; yes, that's it! Now, who is there that comes out every year? There's my cousin Mary Hyde, for one. Incidentally, she'd do very well because she's a clever girl and she would certainly grasp what was required of her, and not ask damn-fool questions. She always went to Kitzbühel; so the obvious thing is to send the things from there—why, glory be! I believe I've got the very thing—yes, I *have*! O.K. Conrad, it's all over bar the carriage paid, and you can tell your girl friend she can have a nice big trunk full of clothes and furs waiting for her at Mary's when she gets to London!"

"My dear chap, this is quite bewildering! You're a positive magician. Heigh-ho! and the thing seems done. And the best of it is I believe you *will* do all you say, though *how*, beats me!"

"It's quite easy, really. D'you remember that Mrs. Turnbull?"

"Who used to play good bridge? Yes, perfectly, why?"

"She's a sort of Universal Aunt in Kitzbühel."

"A *what?*"

I laughed. "You could hardly be expected to know that, could you? But there are agents in London of that name who do all sorts of odd jobs for people: find houses or servants; meet children coming from school; pack up a flat and take the inventory, and so on."

"What a very good idea."

"Yes, isn't it? Well, Mrs. Turnbull does much the same thing. As far as I can make out she provides everything from a chamois to a nursery-gov. She has an authorized agency and I know she *does* send things home, because last time I saw her she was packing up somebody's carpets. What more natural than that Mary should have left a trunk full of clothes behind in her care? I bet you she could get it sent off without any bother at all. The railway people all know her and probably the police do too. She's lived there for years. Anyhow it's worth trying. Get the trunk packed and I'll drop it in Kitzbühel on my way. As for the stamps, I think I'd better just take them openly in my luggage. I'll swear they're mine and that I brought them in, and that I had no idea there was any objection to my taking them out again. You never know, they may not even notice them. I can send them registered post and insured once I'm over the border, and if they're found and refused, I can have them sent back here and we'll find some other method."

"Jeremy, I wish we'd thought of this before."

"How could we? We didn't know whether the Schallnitz had ermine or ashpit cat!"

"I mean, I wish we'd thought about your helping people like this. You could have done *so* much, and now I fear there's very little time left."

"There's still two months."

"I doubt it."

"How d'you mean, you doubt it? I don't go back till the beginning of October."

"Go back? Oh yes, of course, your leave! I was forgetting."

I looked at Conrad searchingly, and my pulse quickened.

"I thought that's what you were referring to, but obviously it isn't. So you think it'll come soon now?"

"What?"

"You know quite well, and so do I."

"It may never come."

"Quite. But you think it will, don't you?"

He was silent for a few minutes as if weighing his answer.

"I think the chances lie somewhere between possibility and probability."

"And that if it comes, it'll come soon?"

"Yes."

"How soon?"

"This month!"

"Good God! *Now*, in August?"

"Why not? The harvest's in, and the weather's good for an offensive."

I opened my mouth to speak, but shut it again. Speech seemed futile. Again that overwhelming sense of disaster. I felt trapped and helpless. There must be a way out, I kept telling myself, but try as I might, I could see none. It reminded me of the nightmares I often had as a child, when I dreamt that someone had shut me up in a dark cupboard and that I must at all costs find the door. I could see myself again half-crazy with panic beating my hands in a frenzy against the woodwork, groping frantically in the blackness for the latch which I could never find, screaming in my terror for someone to let me out. And then would come the waking-up and I would find myself shivering with fright and often dripping with perspiration, but oh! the blessed relief to find that it was only a bad dream after all. I wondered if I should ever wake up to find this a bad dream, but I sensed that no such happy relief would come until I had lived through the grim reality. Conrad with his usual instinct must have realized something of what was passing through my mind, for he put his hand on my arm and I was reminded of a horseman soothing a nervous animal.

"Don't take it so hard, old man," he said. "Apply a little of the philosophy of the East of which you probably have more experience than I. The wheels of destiny are turning very fast just now, and nothing that you or I can do will stop them, though I'm convinced that each of us has an appointed task and that when the time comes, the nature of it will become apparent to us, and we shall fulfil it according to the strength

given to us for that purpose. Our lives are only a pulsation in the heart of the universe; sometimes deep and steady; sometimes shallow and fluttering; but still, only a heart-beat. Even a crisis such as this will pass, my dear Jeremy. To us it will seem an eternity; to eternity, a split second. Don't you believe in God?"

I looked at him, startled.

"Well, I—suppose I do. I mean—well, yes, of course I do!"

"You mean that no one's asked you that question since you were being prepared for confirmation, and you thought it wiser not to put it to yourself! Let's frame it differently. Englishmen are invariably shocked if you talk about the Deity in a practical fashion and out of church. Do you believe in the ultimate good?"

"Naturally!"

"Yes, that's typical: no hesitation there. Well then, what are you worrying about?"

"But Conrad, if there's a war, think of the appalling suffering! This time there'll be a holocaust! We know what the Nazis are like in peace—God Almighty, what will they be like in war? It's—it's *unthinkable*!"

"And what will anyone care about our suffering a hundred years hence? People may read about it in history books, but it won't *matter* except in so far as it affects future generations."

"Well, isn't that bad enough? I mean, I'm not a doctor, but even I know that the health of the younger generation is impaired by war conditions."

"You always think of the detail and of the individual. I'm thinking of mankind as a whole. You're right when you say that if war comes it will bring terrible suffering. Of course it will! Possibly quite unheard-of suffering; and few will be spared. But man was born to suffer. His arrival in this world is associated with pain, and not infrequently his departure from it. An individual who has experienced no anguish either mental or physical, is undeveloped. Pain is necessary to evolution, and it's one of the eternal miracles that man recognizes this and accepts it cheerfully as his contribution towards some good in the future. If this weren't so, few women would willingly have children."

"But that's quite different! A mother knows that it's all worth while, for she has the immediate, tangible joy of the child. The good is hers, and concrete; not someone else's and abstract."

"But she *doesn't* know! that's just the point. She only hopes—which is quite another matter. The child may be born dead, or crippled. It may be the greatest sorrow in her life instead of the greatest joy. It may even grow into a criminal! It's always a toss-up, but woman accepts the risk, and endures, just on the chance that good may come of it. At regular intervals throughout the ages, men and women lay down their lives in the hope that of their sacrifice a new world may be born. It seems only the other day that millions of young men were being killed with the idea of establishing peace on earth. And now? If there's another war thousands will cry out that the last one was in vain! They'll be wrong, of course. For just as there's no profit without loss, so there's no loss without profit. We've made terrible mistakes; wicked mistakes; and the result is to be seen all round us. We're all guilty—all of us! But in the same way that out of millions of children one day Christ was born, so out of hundreds of wars one day peace will be born. It's as inevitable as the day which follows the night. You and I, Jeremy, with the rest of our fellow-beings, look like being faced with greater horrors than we have yet known, but we'll stand up to them with the same spirit as in the past, and with the same hope for the future. If this war comes, who knows, whether we live through it, or whether we die, but that we may be counted amongst the blessed? since for all we can tell, this may be *the* war, the much-prayed-for, much-longed-for war to end war, and if this should be so then we'll be among the chosen few out of countless generations to have the overwhelming honour of taking part in the foundation of a new world. Don't you think that even the faint hope of achieving this would be worth *any* suffering which we might be called upon to endure?"

"Y—es, I suppose so."

"You don't sound very convinced!"

"Well, it's a fine idea, and I'd like to feel convinced. It's such a comforting thought—but I don't really see why the world should be any better after another bloody war, than it was after the last. I don't see what's to prevent it being a great deal worse! I should have thought that the odds were about fifty-fifty."

"I don't think so. The instinct for good is always greater than the instinct for evil. It starts as a constructive thought, goes

from there to a secret longing, on to an expressed wish, and ends with an imperative demand. When the nations no longer pray for peace but exact it with the full co-ordination of their united will-power, then we shall have it. Unfortunately, in order to obtain the enforcement of this underlying desire, the peoples will have to strip themselves, each and all, of many of the things they hold most dear, things to which they cling, with their tradition and their pride more than they do to life itself. So tenaciously do they hang on to their individual tenets that I believe only two things would induce them to sacrifice everything in the common cause: great suffering, and great fear. Such suffering as would draw nations with little else in common together. Such fear as would make death seem a simple and friendly thing!"

"That's a nice happy little picture you've drawn, I must say! Are you trying to frighten the life out of me in order to get me into training, or what?"

"I don't think you'd be frightened of anything that you could grasp and understand."

"Oh, wouldn't I just? Why, I was as sick as a cat every time I had to go over the top, in '14, and if there was any tunnelling by the Hun under our lines, my liver used to turn itself inside out!"

"Good heavens, man! I'm not talking about physical fear. It's just as common to feel that kind as it is to have the courage to get the better of it. I was thinking of mental fear."

"I don't know the ins and outs of that."

"Pray God, you never will!"

"What d'you expect me to do about it all, anyway? As far as I can see I'm to regard the prospect of wholesale slaughter as a blessing in disguise!"

"No. But if necessary, as a means to an end."

"I see. In fact it won't matter a damn what happens to anyone so long as someone gets something!"

"On the contrary, it won't matter a damn what happens to someone as long as everyone gets something."

"That sounds very profound."

"It isn't a bit. But there's one thing that I want you to get into your head—get it there, and keep it there: if this war comes

which we are all dreading, however awful it may be, you *must* have faith in the ultimate good. You *must*, Jeremy!"

"I'll do my best, I promise you, only at the moment that 'good' seems a hell of a long way away! All the same, thanks a lot for taking so much trouble to try and fortify me for the worst. As far as I can see, it seems to be a case of 'For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful.'"

"Amen," said Conrad, and when I looked at him I saw to my astonishment that he really meant it.



## CHAPTER VI

*Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.*

JULIUS CAESAR

HAVING given instructions to be called early, I was up the following day at six. It was a glorious morning, and my spirits and the sun being high, I sang lustily in my bath until angry knocking on the communicating wall reminded me that my neighbour was evidently in no mood to share the beauties of a rising summer day nor the joy of adventure. Reducing my musical outburst to a well-modulated if not very tuneful whistle, I finished dressing, drank a cup of coffee, and was soon over at the Cahns' flat.

Conrad was waiting for me and in an incredibly short time my foot was firmly encased in its plaster dressing with five crisp Bank of England notes cunningly inserted between the moulded mass. By the time Clare came in to say that breakfast was ready I was hobbling about the room with two sticks which Conrad had thoughtfully provided. Kari arrived at half-past eight to accompany me to the Consulate and was much concerned to find me all tied up and full of enquiries as to what I had done to myself.

"Oh, it's nothing, really," I said airily, determined to try out the situation, "only a sprain. I had a stupid fall on the stairs last night and twisted my ankle, but Conrad insists on my having my foot in plaster as he says I've torn the ligaments and that otherwise I must lie up for several days, which naturally I don't want to do just now of all times!"

"What sickening luck! I'm so sorry. Hadn't we better put off going to the Consulate this morning?"

"Certainly not! As it happens, it's an ill wind—since it's obvious to anyone that I can't possibly drive a car myself in this condition and no one will be surprised that I want to take you with me."

"By jove, I hadn't thought of that! What an extraordinarily lucky coincidence—for me, I mean!"

"Isn't it?" I agreed dryly. It was evident that the boy suspected nothing, and I was delighted at this immediate acceptance of the "accident" because it boded well for the future.

"Come on," I said, "it's going to take me hours getting down the stairs. I wish you had a lift in your establishment, Clare."

The scene outside the French Consulate was distinctly familiar in every detail to the one that I had witnessed the day before, except that the voice of the porter could be heard raised in high excited tones as he remonstrated with the clamouring mob at the gates of the Embassy garden.

This time I was not backward in coming forward. Hobbling on my sticks I told Kari to push a way for me through the crowd and I was soon on the wrong side of the closed gate. I shouted to the porter who paid not the slightest attention until I yelled in an irate voice:

*"Mais voyons ouvrez donc! J'ai un passeport britannique!"*

At the sound of that magic word he turned and hurried to the gate and looked carefully at the loudly advertised object which I brandished in full view of everyone. His Latin caution, however, still prevented him from letting me in at once and he said in rather an aggrieved voice:

"Well, if you've got a British passport you don't need a visa!"

"Of course I don't!" I replied sharply, "but I need to see the Consul, and as I understand that he is very busy and I don't want to disturb him during his lunch-hour the sooner you let me in the better it will be for both of us."

The man hesitated. My voice had been very firm.

"I don't think Monsieur le Consul can see anyone except by appointment. Have you an appointment?"

"No, but I shall have as soon as he reads this." I thrust my letter of introduction under his nose and blessed my friend for having put the consular stamp on it. As the gate opened for me I ruminated on the wonders of a bit of red wax and an official seal. I pushed Kari ahead of me and as the porter was about to protest, shut him up peremptorily with the remark:

"My chauffeur. He can wait in the garden," and without pausing to see what effect this had I leant on Kari's arm and

limped up the path. We soon reached the top of the steps where half a dozen people were gazing disconsolately at a closed door. I tried the handle. It was locked.

"It's no use," said one of the men, "they won't let any more in this morning. We'll have to wait till two o'clock."

"We'll see about that!" I said aggressively, by this time adopting the superior attitude of my race abroad. I kept my finger on the bell for fully thirty seconds whereupon the door opened suddenly and an infuriated figure filled the entire opening.

"Haven't I told you before?" it roared, "can't you understand? No more, d'you hear! No *more!*" At that moment the angry eye fell upon my passport and the accompanying letter which I held up without a word. Instantly there was a complete change of manner.

"*Pardon, M'sieur!* I did not know—*vous m'excuserez, M'sieur, entrez!*"

"Wait here," I said to Kari, and as the door closed once more I felt embarrassed as I caught sight of a last look of envy on the faces of the little group outside.

"I'm afraid Monsieur may have to wait," said the messenger apologetically.

"But naturally!" I answered, slipping into French, "that is to be expected." I sat down quietly at the end of a long row of chairs all occupied by refugees, and having duly filled up the requisite forms stating my requirements and giving every conceivable detail as to my own ancestors and those of Kari, I opened the book which I had brought for the purpose and was soon happily immersed in it.

From time to time as the hours ticked away I was distracted from my reading by an altercation between one of the waiting applicants whose patience was visibly ebbing and the messenger who, with descriptive shrugs, assured them that their turn would come. I noticed one woman hovering near the table upon which were placed the application forms and was amused to see reflected in the mirror above it how she surreptitiously extracted her own form from the middle of the bunch and placed it upon the top. I was still more amused when the messenger returned to observe him frown with a puzzled expression at the uppermost name and then with a sardonic look at the owner quietly transfer the

slip to the bottom of the pile. A true embassy servant, he not only possessed an infallible memory for names and faces, but was obviously quite equal to the little deceptions which his clients were evidently in the habit of practising upon him.

At about twelve fifteen my vigil came to an end and I was ushered into the Consul's room. A distinguished-looking man sprang up to help me to a chair and immediately turned to the business in hand.

"I have the letter about you from my colleague Mr. K.," he said, fingering my letter of introduction. "He speaks very highly of you and I shall be only too happy to do what I can, but it appears that you wish to take a German subject to France, and that, of course, is not such a simple matter to arrange."

"I appreciate that," I put in quickly, "and if it's at all complicated please don't bother, I must just manage somehow, that's all—go by train perhaps, and leave the car behind. But I had hoped to be able to obtain a visa for this man to drive me to Paris, and if you could see your way to doing this I should be very much obliged. It's so dashed awkward not being able to use my foot," I added, pointing to the offending member.

"You certainly can't drive a car at the moment, I quite see that. I hadn't realized that it was a question of an injury. Mr. K. just mentioned that you need a chauffeur, but under the circumstances your request is very natural. Let me see—this man—what's his name? Oh yes, Oppersdorf—is he a Jew?"

He shot the question at me so suddenly that I realized at once that had there been any need for prevarication I should have been caught off my guard.

"Good gracious, no!" I laughed easily. "Quite the reverse. Most of the family, I think, have been Knights of Malta!"

He looked up quickly.

"I thought you said that he was your chauffeur?"

"So he is. You know how it is with most of these aristocrats—they haven't a bean to their name, and are only too thankful to take on any kind of job. Anyway I'm very glad to be able to employ him because for one thing his aunt in Paris is an old friend of mine—the Princesse de P., you know?" I mentioned a famous name in France with some trepidation, not at this part of my story, for it was the truth and nothing but the truth,

but because I wondered if the purveyor of passport visas was very "left" or very "right," my experience of French civil servants being that their politics rarely took the line of happy medium. My luck held, for the Consul brightened visibly.

"Is that so? Ah, what a beautiful woman!" His eyes took on a dreamy expression and I blessed the inspiration that had prompted the mention of the illustrious name. "Of course, that makes it much easier," he said, and I allowed my tense muscles the luxury of relaxing, "I mean Herr Oppersdorf having relations in Paris!"

"If you are thinking of the possibility that he might become a burden to the State, I can assure you that there is no *question* of such a situation arising," I stated warmly.

"You can promise that?"

"Absolutely!"

"Good. Then I think that I can arrange matters, Mr. Upton-Greig."

I started to thank him but he interrupted me.

"I am only too pleased to find it in my power to say 'yes.' I so often have to say 'no' that to give the happier answer is something in the nature of a treat for me."

He smiled at me and I noticed that his eyes were very kind and very shrewd and I suddenly wondered how much he guessed or perhaps even knew. At any rate I left him with Kari's passport enriched by the auspicious endorsement and with the conviction that I had fooled him not at all, but that he was glad to keep his eyes shut provided that the official regulations did not necessitate their being propped open.

Once more outside in the sunlight I took Kari's arm, but my face can have betrayed none of the elation which I felt for the porter's voice expressed doubt as well as expectation when he asked me if my visit had been to my satisfaction. The answer in the shape of five marks, apparently convinced him, but as Kari had not observed the exchange of civilities he was not enlightened until I put the passport on his knee in the taxi on the way back. He sat staring at the visa as if he had never seen one before or was expecting it to disappear at any moment leaving the page a blank as it had been a few hours earlier.

"I can't believe it," he said. "I just can't believe it! I don't know how you did it."

"Chiefly by spraining my foot! But look here, apropos of that: you might remember that I twisted my ankle this morning, will you?"

"This morning? But I thought you said that it happened last night."

"I know, but I've just remembered that I walked out of the hotel, hale and hearty at 7 a.m., so I can't have, can I?"

He looked at me with blank astonishment for a moment and then broke into such a whoop of joy that the driver looked round to see what was happening. What he saw was Kari working my hand up and down like a pump-handle while he muttered: "*glänzend!—aber herrlich!*" and various other expressions which seemed to denote that he found the strategy of my campaign entirely to his liking. I asked the boy to lunch, but he was so anxious to get back to his parents with the glad news that I didn't press him.

"Keep this to yourself," I said to him as I dropped him at a convenient tram-stop.

"What d'you mean?"

"I mean tell the family, of course, but no one else."

He looked serious and nodded.

"Very well, though there's nothing to stop me now, is there?"

"I hope not. But if I were you I'd just get on with the packing quietly and keep your mouth shut. We'll get away early on Saturday morning."

"*Gut ist's!* I'll be ready. And see here, Mr. Greig, thank you just a *thousand* times, you're absolutely prime!"

"That's all right; I'm glad I struck it lucky."

As he shut the door of the taxi he said he hoped that my foot would soon be less painful! and looking into his bright mischievous eyes and happy smiling face, I felt an overwhelming sense of thankfulness that one fledgeling at least would soon be free of the Prussian eagle's claws.

It had been arranged that I should spend the night with the Cahns and that Conrad was to telephone the hotel that I had had an accident and get the chasseur to bring over my pyjamas and shaving tackle so as to impress the news upon the mana-

gerial mind. So far things were going splendidly and after I had tucked away one of Elsie's super suppers I spent a blissfully happy evening helping Clare to catalogue her stamps (and incidentally in confirming that her estimate of the value of the Schallnitz collection was if anything too modest).

Sitting there in that charmingly decorated little living-room, our chairs drawn up to the bridge-table on which a tall standard-lamp threw a strong but well-shaded light leaving the rest of the room in shadow, turning over the stamps, examining them, admiring them, but speaking little, I felt such a sense of peace and quiet as I had seldom, if ever, experienced. It was so perfect, so harmonious, that I paused to let the feeling of content sink into me. The world seemed suddenly to stand still. There was no hurry and stress; no fear, no excitement; no passion; only an atmosphere of intense concord and two people happily sorting stamps. Clare looked up at me and smiled.

"What are you thinking about, Jug? You look just like a cat that has swallowed a saucer of cream!"

"Then I look what I feel, and if I could purr, I would!"

"Happy?"

"Very."

"So am I!"

"I know; otherwise I shouldn't be. D'you know, I believe it's all going to come out all right."

"What?"

"You, and Conrad and even my life. I have a feeling that one day it'll be like this always. You know, cosy and peaceful and nothing to worry about but stamps!"

"D'you really feel that?"

"Very strongly. So strongly that at the moment I'm sure of it."

"Bless you, dear, for your faith. I don't know what I'd do without it."

I slipped my hand over hers and pressed the fingers lightly.

"Nothing will ever come between us, will it, Jug?"

"Nothing!" I answered firmly. "Now look, would you call this Sardinian deep blue or indigo?"

And we were still cataloguing when Conrad dragged me off at midnight to the sofa in the study.

The sofa was comfortable, and I was in a comfortable state

of mind, and yet somehow I couldn't get to sleep. Whether my foot bothered me with its cumbersome wrapping or whether the hot, close night made me restless I couldn't say, but I tossed and turned until the first streaks of dawn were in the sky. My thoughts kept returning to Kari and to the trip which lay ahead of us and for some reason I had an unaccountable feeling of anxiety. "It must be journey fever," I said to myself. "How idiotic! considering the amount that I've travelled all my life." But all the same the feeling persisted and when at last I fell into an uneasy sleep, it was with a distinct sense of disquiet. I had no sooner dropped off than I began to dream; a dream so realistic, so vivid, that I was to remember it for the rest of my life. I was standing in the large square hall of the Oppersdorfs' house and it seemed to be full of people. There was a quite unbearable atmosphere of oppression and disaster, and for a moment I could not take in what was happening. Then suddenly I saw the whole scene like a tableau. I remember thinking it was like one of the waxwork groups at Madame Tussaud's. Standing between four blackshirted Nazis was Kari; his face very different from the boyish one that had laughed into mine a few hours previously. He was gazing at his mother with a distraught expression, and when I followed the direction of his glance I saw that she was standing rigidly at the foot of the stairs with every drop of colour drained from her face and such a look of agony on it that I went cold from head to foot. Hugo von Oppersdorf sat limply in a big oak chair, his hands grasping the carved knobs and his eyes fixed on the polished floor in front of him. While I stared at these tense figures, rooted to the spot, the S.S. men seized Kari roughly by the elbows. This galvanized me into action and I sprang forward and caught hold of the nearest guard. "What are you doing?" I cried, and my voice sounded funny. "You can't take him away, he's coming with me." The man shook off my grip and began to pull Kari towards the door. "Stop!" I shouted. "Stop! Don't you understand? He's my chauffeur—he's coming with me to Paris. It's all in order. Stop, I tell you!" A big, red-faced man turned on me with a snarl. "Shut up! and mind your own business," he snapped, "or we'll take you along with him!" At that I saw red. Springing forward I crashed my first into his face and kicking right and left tried to force my



way to the boy. But they were four to one and they soon had me down, and while I struggled on the floor with two of them the other two dragged Kari to the door and I heard it shut with a sickening thud behind them. I was fighting like a maniac now but at last I could do no more. One of them was sitting on my chest and the other had my arms pinioned. Everything seemed to spin round and I suppose I must have fainted for the whole scene was suddenly blacked-out. When I opened my eyes I was lying on the floor of the study and Conrad was sitting across my body with a very worried look on his face.

"Conrad!" I gasped, "quick! let me up. They've got the boy!"

At this moment Clare appeared with a white face and a glass in her hand.

"Lie still, Jeremy, while I count fifty. And drink this," said Conrad's sternest-to-be-obeyed voice.

I felt limp and gulped the concoction without a word, thankful for the cold water. In a few minutes I was sitting, very shaken, on the sofa, telling them word for word of the terrible experience I had just been through.

"I can't believe it's a dream," I said. "Those men were real; I'd know them anywhere. And the Baroness—my God! I'll never forget her face. It must have happened. I couldn't imagine a thing like that. Good Lord! No, it hasn't happened, but it's *going to happen*—that's it! Clare, Conrad, quick! help me get my things, I must get that boy away now—*now*, d'you understand?"

"Jug dear, don't upset yourself so! It's all right, really it is. You've had a fearful dream and threw yourself out of bed and Conrad found you threshing about on the floor and had to sit on you to keep you quiet. But it's only a ghastly nightmare. You're here with us, and if you're worried about Kari we can ring up and you'll soon see that he's as right as rain!"

"No, Clare, he isn't all right. I'm sorry to be in such a state—I'm not batty or anything, but I tell you that wasn't just a dream; it was different. I can't explain, but it was *real*, and I've had a horrid feeling of uneasiness all night—as if something were going to happen. I know the Nazis are going to get that boy, if they haven't done so already. One of you must get me a taxi. I'm going round at once."

"But, Jug, it's five o'clock in the morning! You can't go at this hour. Get back into bed. I'll make you some coffee and you can go at seven."

I shook my head. "I know you think I'm mad, but I must go, I tell you, I *must*!"

"Yes, I think you'd better go, Jeremy," said Conrad in such a matter-of-fact voice that I paused while pulling on my shirt and stared at him. "There are stranger things in this world than premonitions," he went on, "and you can't do any harm by going whereas you might never forgive yourself if you didn't. Whether you can persuade young Oppersdorf is another matter, but for your own peace of mind I'd certainly try."

"It's not Kari I shall persuade, it's his mother!" I said, with a sudden flash of intuition.

Conrad looked at me thoughtfully.

"This is off our beat, Clare," he said. "Make some coffee now, there's a good girl. I'll just get my trousers on and try and find a taxi."

At half-past five my cab drew up at the Oppersdorfs'. The house was on a corner of a quiet street and of a tiny little lane with a high wall on either side down which I directed the driver. About twenty yards farther on was a small gate leading into the garden and here I stopped him and told him to wait. He seemed a bit dubious about blocking up the lane but I assured him that nothing ever came down it and upon receiving a first instalment of ten marks I found that he was prepared to hold up the Kärntnerstrasse if need be! I returned to the front door which gave on to the street and rang the bell. Eventually it was answered by Kari himself who was naturally considerably surprised to see me. I told him not to ask questions but to get dressed and to pack the rest of his most valued belongings and be quick about it.

"You've only got half an hour," I said, "so cram in what you really need and make it snappy! and please wake your mother and ask her if she will be kind enough to come and speak to me—it's very urgent."

It did not take me more than a few minutes to explain to Baroness Stephanie my strange and wild schemes and my reason for wanting her son to leave immediately. She went rather white but never hesitated an instant in agreeing to everything that I

suggested and expressed no astonishment but only gratitude for my very remarkable behaviour. Hugo seemed rather dazed when told the news that Kari was leaving then and there, but he said that as I was kind enough to make it possible for the boy to go at all, the least they could do was to concur with any plans that I might consider necessary. It was decided therefore that I should take Kari to a little shop in the Mariahilfstrasse which was kept by his old nurse and her husband. They lived on the premises and would hide him in their kitchen until I had the car ready for the road, which I hoped would be in about forty-eight hours. Explanations would be unnecessary it appeared, for the hairdresser and his wife could be relied upon to do anything for the boy and were very discreet. It was agreed also that the parents should make no attempt to communicate with their son but that I should keep them informed of all movements.

A neighbouring clock was just striking six when I loaded the last of Kari's bags upon the taxi and returned to tell him that it was time to go. I waited in the dining-room with Hugo while the boy went to his mother's room to say good-bye. We neither of us felt that we could bear to witness that parting and the Baron's face looked pinched and old as he stood motionless in the bay-window gazing into the sunlit street. Suddenly he gave a start and leant forward.

"Greig," he said, and his voice sounded queerly high-pitched, "quick, come here!"

It did not take me a second to see what had caused his urgent cry, and as my eyes followed his my heart came into my throat and I could feel the gooseflesh rising all over my body.

In the street, about a hundred yards away, four blackshirted figures were walking slowly up the hill towards the house.

"Christ!" I gasped. "They're here! That's the one—that red-faced brute on the right, the one I hit——"

For about ten seconds I was paralysed and then I sprang to action and my brain seemed to work at lightning speed.

"Can you trust the servants?" I barked. Hugo nodded. He seemed beyond speech. "Then for God's sake pull yourself together! Wake them and tell them they're to say that Kari left yesterday for Corinthia, to fish with some friends—you don't know exactly where—he's sending his address. D'you

understand? Go to bed then, and get the gardener to be slow about opening the door; you should gain five or six minutes. Hurry, man, hurry!"

He was gone. I plunged into the Baroness' room without knocking and found her in Kari's arms.

"They're here!" I cried. "Get to the taxi, Kari. Freewheel round the corner and wait. If I'm not there in two minutes drive like hell! Come on, run for your life!" A last agonized kiss and he was off down the stairs two at a time.

"Don't *think*; act!" I said to the stricken woman. "Make his bed; tidy his room. He left for Kärnten last night, address unknown—got that? Your husband and the servants know. Pretend to be asleep when they come. God bless you—I'll let you know——"

I hobbled to the head of the stairs, and flinging my leg over the bannister I slid to the bottom, gaining several seconds. The path to the garden gate seemed endless as I stumbled and hopped along it and as I fumbled with the latch the loud buzzing of a bell behind me told me that I had not been a minute too soon and that my fears were all too well founded. I half expected to find the lane full of Nazis, but it was empty of anything save a thrush sitting on an overhanging branch and singing as if all the world were carefree. I made my way down the sloping alley as fast as I dared, terrified lest the iron on my foot striking on the cobbles should sound sufficiently loud to attract attention. At the bend which hid the street corner from view I looked back. The lane was still empty and ten yards ahead of me the taxi stood waiting. I fell into it, sprawling over a suitcase on the floor, and before I could even recover my breath the driver had released the brake and we were bumping silently down the hill.

"What did you tell him?" I asked, pointing to our taxi-man. I was still panting and I mopped the sweat which was trickling down my neck either from fear, or from my exertions, or from both.

"That I'd had a row with my parents and was making a get-away."

"Did he believe you?"

"Dunno, but he's co-operating anyway, which is the main thing."

We lit our cigarettes. My hands trembled but the boy's were steady and his eyes shone as they looked for an instant into mine over the flaming match.

"It'll take a hell of a lot to get even with you over this, but I'll do it some day if I'm still alive."

"It was just a hunch!"

"Some hunch! And some quick work, too! Why, if you'd stopped to put on a suit and a collar and tie, I'd be taking a ride with someone else by now!"

Instinctively I put my hand to my throat where my open-necked shirt left it free. I shivered.

"Cold?"

"Well—er—it's a bit parky in shorts at this hour of the morning."

He slipped his arm through mine and gave it a squeeze and we drove in silence until the taxi stopped outside the sign "Friseur." The hairdresser opened the little door himself, and Kari had soon disappeared through it followed by the luggage. As it shut again the driver turned to me with a grin and said:

"Und jetzt?"

"And now," I answered, "back to the start, and after that the best breakfast you've had for years or a '*Schwipps*' for the rest of the day if you prefer it!"

He gave the characteristic *mir's recht*—O.K. by me—and by a quarter to seven we were both eating a delicious omelet and drinking steaming coffee, I in Conrad's study, he in Elsie's kitchen.

When I finally saw him out of the flat and tried to push fifty marks into his hand he flatly refused to take it.

"When you first engaged me," he said, "I thought you just wanted to go home after a party, or that it was an intrigue; but now that I know that you were helping the young gentleman, that's different. I'm glad to have been of use, and I hope he gets away! It's all right," he added, seeing my startled look, "I don't remember *any* of the addresses I've been to this morning!" Coming closer to me he turned back the lapel of his jacket disclosing a little pin with a crown on it. I gave a sigh of relief as I recognized the Monarchist party badge and realized that he would never give us away. With a sudden inspiration I turned

to Clare and asked her to fetch the scarf which I had been wearing the night before.

"As you won't accept a tip, I want to give you something to remind you of the good work you have done to-day and in the hope of better times to come. Wait a minute; it's just coming."

Clare returned with my neckwear, a large silk square reminiscent of the Burlington Arcade and my athletic days. It was a black scarf with broad gold stripes, and as he saw it the driver's eyes lit up and he looked at me questioningly. "Yes, that's it," I nodded. "*Schwarz-gelb!*"

He grinned delightedly, fingered the silk with pleasure, and then with a triumphant gesture placed the Habsburg colours round his neck.

We shook hands warmly and after mutual expressions of thanks and esteem, the old man went back to his taxi and I returned to the study to work out the next stage of the problem of how to get Kari away now that the Gestapo had apparently decided to cast their evil eye upon him.

## CHAPTER VII

*These troublesome disguises that we wear.*

MILTON

How was it to be done? That was the question. Clare was all for our starting right away in a hired or borrowed car as the Ford still had her engine down, but both Conrad and I felt that the frontier might be watched if, indeed, the S.S. guards had come to the house on the Hohe Warte for the purpose which I had seen so clearly in my dream. The first step seemed to be to ascertain the nature of their visit which after all might have been just a routine matter, though it certainly seemed incredible if this were so that four uniformed men should have been ordered to undertake it at six o'clock in the morning!

We decided finally that Clare should ring up the Oppersdorfs with the excuse of asking them to bridge and that somehow the news that Kari was safe for the moment must be conveyed and if possible some information obtained. Ten minutes later she returned from the telephone, her face flushed with excitement.

"My God, Jug, you were right!" she said a little breathlessly. "They wanted him all right; searched the whole house for his passport!"

"How d'you know?"

"Stephanie. She asked me if by any chance Kari had mentioned where he was going to fish for his holiday because the police wanted to check up on his passport and she and Hugo hadn't got his address. She said that she was rather fussed about it and that they had searched everywhere for his passport but that he must have taken it with him. Hugo had gone to the police-station to give what particulars he could but that it was really very tiresome of the boy to go off like that and give them such a lot of bother. If anyone had been tapping the line they can only have got the impression of a rather peevish mother. Stephanie was quite admirable. I told her Kari was all right, and I bet that cheered her up a packet!"

"How on earth did you do that?"

"I asked her to the Café Adler for twelve o'clock and then

remembered that I couldn't meet her as I had an appointment at the hairdresser's. For a minute she didn't get me and she said: 'But you're always going to the hairdresser!' So I said: 'Of course I am! I've got a very handsome young man who attends to me, with black hair and blue eyes, and if you knew what a charming smile he's got you'd go there too!'

"Well done, both of you—jolly good work. We know where we stand now, anyway. It was clever of the Baroness to speak naturally like that about the search, wasn't it, Conrad?"

He nodded, but his face was so grave that Clare asked him if anything was the matter.

"I think it's worse even than you thought, Jeremy," he said. "Poor old Hugo!"

"My God! You don't think——?"

There was silence in the room until at last I could bear it no longer and let out a string of oaths.

"Perhaps," said Conrad, "I'm over-pessimistic. Perhaps they *will* let him go again. But if they don't find the boy—dammit, Jeremy, they *won't* find him, they mustn't! Come on, let's get to work and get him away. It's no good sitting here mourning for Hugo. The young come first. One thing's as clear as daylight: he'll have to be smuggled out. If they're looking for his passport here you can bet your boots they'll look for it at every blooming frontier!"

"Then he'd better travel on mine," I said quietly.

"Yours? But Jug, dear, you're not a bit alike, and besides you're nearly forty-five and Kari's twenty-two!"

"Yes, I know, but we're about the same height—he's over six feet anyway, and we've both got blue eyes."

Conrad shook his head. "It wouldn't do I'm afraid. You have a small nose of no particular shape—no offence intended—and Kari's is like his mother's, Grecian; even if we could do something about the shape of the face and the hair——"

"Wait!" I burst in. "Wait! you've given me an idea. Listen, I've had an accident, haven't I? The hotel know, but except for the French Consular people no one has seen me, at least I can only hope they haven't. Well, why shouldn't it have been a much worse accident? I mean why shouldn't I have cut my face about badly?"



Conrad gave a start and sat up abruptly in his chair.

"Go on," he said, "go on!"

"Don't you see? My head could be swathed in bandages; plaster on my nose; only one blue eye showing; or rather it would be Kari's head all tied up and his foot in plaster instead of mine, and we could dye his hair red—for once in my life I believe I'm going to be glad that I've got a copper top—and in my clothes, d'you know I rather fancy he could pass easily for me if anyone'd seen me looking much the same, and someone will *have* to see me looking like that! The point is who? Think that out! Well, what d'you make of it?"

"I think it might be done," said Conrad slowly, "yes, I really believe it might! Appallingly risky, of course, but there doesn't seem any alternative does there? The difficulty, as I see it, would be at the frontier. Would the guards accept you, or rather Kari, at—shall we say—face value?"

"That *is* the difficulty, of course. I'm sure we could get away with it in Vienna, but at the border—well, I'm not so certain. If they didn't bother much and weren't suspicious—dash it, where do they check you up with your passport least, I wonder?"

"On the Orient Express," said Clare. "After all, a wpman with her hair in curlers and her face all covered with cream seldom looks the fetching creature portrayed on her passport. I often wonder how they recognize anyone at all!"

"That's true, and if the conductor were well tipped and satisfied it might work. Those customs fellows hardly ever do more than poke their noses into the compartment and if the bags are all open inviting a search they often leave you alone. I've done it dozens of times and never been scrutinized. By jove, Clare, I believe it would be worth trying. I wonder if there's a berth free to-day? Wait, though, does the damn train run to-day? Thursday? Yes, it does! That's a bit of luck. Good omen, perhaps. I'll pop round and see the manager of the American Express; I know him well, and he may be able to fix up what I want; but you'll have to get to work on my face, Conrad, and mess me up so that my own mother wouldn't know me!"

"Come into the surgery and I'll see what I can do."

"What Conrad did was masterly. I had a dressing and a bandage over the whole of one side of my face, half-covering my

nose and mouth and one eye, the skin, where it emerged from under the cotton-wool, was discoloured with iodine, and a nick on my nose with a razor-blade and subsequent adhesive plaster made me completely unrecognizable, and when Conrad insisted on my wearing my tortoiseshell glasses with one end tied to the bandage, the effect was even better. Anyone looking at me would, I felt, be riveted by my injuries and would hardly notice any peculiarities except perhaps the tufts of red hair sticking up between the folds of the bandage.

My entry into the hall of the hotel caused a minor sensation! The porter, the lift-boy, the reception-clerk, and finally the manager were profuse with their sympathy, and I had to give a series of explanations about tripping over a piece of loose carpet and hitting my head on an iron-bound chest at the foot of the stairs. I told the manager that I had decided to go to Paris for a few days to transact some business, as I obviously couldn't go on the walking tour which I had planned. I arranged for the valet to pack some things for me and found everyone most attentive when I told them I should probably be back in about a week or ten days and that I wanted to keep my room on. After stuffing my pockets with a few things that I needed for myself, I called a taxi and drove to the American Express.

Here I was in luck. Although every sleeper appeared to be booked for weeks it transpired that a first-class single berth had been returned that morning and after a few words with the director it was allotted to me.

"I'd like to have a word with your courier, if he's here," I said to the clerk after I had cashed a cheque and paid for my ticket.

"He should be, sir, there's no train due just now. Just a moment and I'll see if I can find him."

The man duly appeared and I told him that I would be travelling that afternoon and would like him to see me on to the train and get hold of my conductor as I was severely handicapped by my foot. The clerk, who had evidently been impressed by my connection with the director, informed the courier that I was a friend of the "chief," and must be well looked after, and the latter, sensing a good tip, was eager to be of service and said that he would watch out for the arrival of the hotel 'bus.

So far, so good. Things were going quite well, but now came

the ticklish part. I collected Conrad, complete with doctor's bag, and dropped him about a hundred yards from the shop in the Mariahilfstrasse where Kari was in hiding. It would be advisable, I thought, for us not to go together just in case we were being shadowed, and I took the extra precaution of being set down at the Café Pitter and of entering this building by one door and going out into a back street by another. I was soon discussing the situation with Kari and with his old nurse, who supplied the bright suggestion that her husband should dye the boy's hair on the spot during the lunch hour when the shop was closed. Half an hour later Conrad, having had a haircut downstairs, joined us, and by one o'clock the transformation was complete.

And complete it certainly was! I must say as I looked at Kari with his face tied up, his foot in plaster and my clothes fitting him remarkably well that I would never have recognized him and that the impersonation was excellent. "Nanny's" husband had made a good job of his hair, matching it very well with mine and parting it in the same way, and when he left for the hotel with my glasses on his strapped-up nose, my bill in his pocket and my cheque for settling it, I felt reasonably sure that the staff would have no suspicions. He had always been a good actor and while we were putting the final touches to him he was already practising my manner of speech and the slight English accent, or rather intonation, which he said was sometimes discernible. He was in high spirits and seemed delighted at the idea of sitting in my bedroom until it was time for him to go to the train, because he said that there were some of my books he particularly wanted to look at!

The most risky part of the business now was the fact that I must on no account be seen or recognized by anyone, and I decided that the wisest plan would be to lie low and not attempt to return to the Cahns' until it was dark. The chances were, I thought, that if any or all of Kari's haunts were being watched, they would take the boy for me and duly report that I had left on the Paris train, if indeed their sleuthing went as far as that, which I very much doubted. There was nothing to do but to wait and the hours seemed interminable. Conrad, of course, had returned at once, and Clare was to see "me" off at the station

and bring us news as to how things went. When at long last Elsie let me into the flat, I was relieved to see that until I spoke to her she failed to recognize me. My carrotty hair had been subdued to a rich mouse-colour, and with a battered Tiroler hat filled with *Alpenrosen*, leather shorts, rucksack and no glasses, I looked the part of the holiday hiker I pretended to be, and not the crippled Englishman who had left the house many hours earlier.

Clare, of course, was back from the station, and her sparkling eyes told me before she could speak that everything had gone off as planned.

"He was simply splendid! You should have seen the way he touched his hat to the hotel busman with that sort of half-salute you always give; it was so characteristic that I nearly giggled. The American Express man swallowed hook and line and I heard him tell the conductor, who by the way was French, thank God, that you were a valued client and very rich! Kari spoke to him in French and to me in English, so I think the picture was pretty complete. Anyway, he said that he wanted to go to bed early and handed over your passport and the ticket with a nice fat *douceur* and the request that he shouldn't be disturbed by the customs people more than was absolutely necessary. And then came the best part of all. The conductor turned to him with a smile and said:

"That will be all right, m'sieur, I remember m'sieur quite well. We travelled together before and we discovered that we had been alongside on the Marne! Does m'sieur not remember?"

"Good God!" I said, "what incredible luck! I remember the little fellow; he had a blond moustache and some fingers missing from his hand; that's how we came to talk about the war."

"Yes, that's the man all right; but you must have tipped him pretty handsomely, Jug, for him to remember your name so well after all that time."

"Just the usual, I expect, but I have a sort of feeling that there was more to it than that—oh! I know now—we had a drink together in his little cubby-hole and I gave him some Goldflake. That's probably why he remembers."

"Well, Kari can thank his stars that you have a knack of

making friends with all and sundry. I believe, oh, Jug, I do believe he'll get through!"

"I think he'll be very unlucky now if he doesn't. The gods seem to have been with us. How soon shall we know?"

"He'll send me a wire from Strassburg."

"How'll you let his mother know?"

"She's at the Werner's."

"What?"

"Yes. Hugo is still—still away, and she couldn't stay all alone in that house waiting and waiting. I'd have had her here like a shot, but it obviously wouldn't have been wise. I shall ring up Lilli Werner and give her a pre-arranged message for Stephanie. They're playing poker all night to keep her mind off."

"Jolly good idea! And what are we going to do to keep our minds off? I nearly went crackers hanging around at Nanny's all the afternoon."

"What about cataloguing the French colonials?"

"Grand idea! And there are the latest Greeks that want doing too"

We settled ourselves once again at the little baize-covered table, and it was half-past four in the morning before we rose from it and decided to lie down a little and try to get some rest. I was convinced that I shouldn't be able even to doze off, but the excitement and the strain must have tired me out more than I knew, for I soon fell sound asleep, this time a dreamless sleep and didn't wake up until past breakfast time.

How we got through that morning I don't know, and the agony of mind of poor Baroness Oppersdorf must have been terrible, realizing as she must have done that if anything went wrong and the boy were caught, it meant certain death, since travelling on a foreign passport would be sure to bring up a charge of espionage.

At last the long-drawn-out suspense was over and we were sitting down to lunch when a ring at the door brought us all to our feet and our hearts to our mouths. Clare's hands trembled to such an extent that she couldn't open the envelope and I had to do it for her.

"Excellent journey, slept all night, head better, love to all. Jeremy." I read. "Sent from Strassburg," I added. Suddenly

my legs felt unaccountably weak and I sat down abruptly and found that I had nothing to say.

In silence Conrad and I watched Clare go over to the telephone and dial the Werner's number.

\* \* \* \*

In spite of my trying to hurry-on the overhaul of the car it was, after all, Saturday morning before she was ready for the road again, and I was thankful to be able to get out of the flat after being cooped up for two days. I left the house in the very early morning, and making my way via devious routes to the railway station, I boarded the first train for St. Pölten. Here, I had arranged to wait for Clare who was to bring herself, the car and the luggage by road. She had made elaborate plans to collect the Schallnitz trunk by taxi and transfer it at the garage so that the somewhat conspicuous body of the Ford (it was a utility van) should not attract too much attention. Conrad was very anxious that Clare should have a complete break from the constricted life in Vienna, and declared that she was badly in need of a holiday and prescribed some rock-climbing as the best tonic for her rather frayed nerves. As this fitted in perfectly with my plans and gave me a glorious opportunity for having her entirely to myself for a short while, it can be imagined how eagerly I accepted his suggestion which was, as usual, entirely based on consideration for others.

Soon after ten o'clock I saw the wooden body of the Ford flash past the windows of the café where I was waiting and draw up in the car park, and about half an hour later we were on our way towards Linz and Salzburg. As we passed the "White Ox" in Melk I thought of the evening we had spent there. It seemed so long ago—almost in the limbo of happy far-off things—and yet in reality only four or five weeks had gone by since we had been dreaming on the banks of the Danube, dreaming of the future which appeared now rather dim and uncertain.

The run was uneventful, but though I knew the road like the back of my hand it never failed to charm me, the constant change in the type of scenery precluding any possibility of boredom or monotony. Leaving the great rolling country between St. Pölten and Linz, interrupted by intermittent encounters with the Danube,

and having lunched at Wels packed with jaunty young members of the Luftwaffe, we approached the plateau-like ridge that lies east of Salzburg, and the day being yet young, we decided to make a *détour* through the *Salzkammergut*. We stopped at the Mondsee to bathe and as I floated on my back in the clear water looking up at the lovely hills all round I thought how perfect it would be if only one hadn't to thread one's way through fat red bodies frying under their grease and blistering in the sun in order that their owners, with misguided conceit, could display the much-vaunted tan at their desks in Berlin. There is a particularly lovely road running from the Mondsee over a small wooded pass to St. Gilgin, and as Clare had never been over it we meandered gently that way, catching glimpses of arresting beauty at every curve until we struck the main Salzburg road. Here, quantities of charabancs streaming past from the direction of Bad Ischl and the Wolfgangsee reminded us that the German idea of the Musical Festival is to sight-see madly during the day-time rather than to sit about in the gardens and cafés of Salzburg chatting with acquaintances and watching the celebrities drift in and out.

Clare had made up her mind in the spring of 1938 that there would be no more Salzburg for her. She had no desire to encounter the spirits of the Maestro and Bruno Walter or of Faust and Jedermann walking homeless in the streets of a town that had once been theirs, nor did she want to see leather shorts and *Knackwurst* in the foyer of the Festspielhaus where once the most distinguished musical enthusiasts of the world had made an elegant foreground to the setting of the old riding-school. Still, however soul-destroying the invasion of Salzburg, its culinary assets had not been wholly impaired, and after travelling about two hundred kilometres on a hot summer's day we felt that some well-cooked trout and a *Salzburger Nockerl* might help us to forget some of the joys that might have been. We pulled up therefore at a small hotel in Parsch on the outskirts of the town which was a popular haunt of actors and singers and rarely overrun by the general public. Here, to our relief, we found comparative seclusion in the shady garden and the proprietor was so overcome with joy at the sight of our familiar faces that he outdid even his well-merited reputation for serving a first-

class meal. Our dallying under the peaceful trees was deliberate, for the road ahead was a special favourite and we knew that it was at its best in the evening light.

Those who have never made the run from Bad Reichenhall to Kitzbuhel can have no conception of the beauty of the drive, while those who are fortunate enough to have passed that way seldom forget the great towering grey rocks of the Loferer Steinberge, the splashing waters of the Saalach as it winds between boulders and rowan trees and the gay charm of Lofer, one of the prettiest villages in all Tyrol.

Turning off the main road soon after passing St. Johann-i-Tirol and winding up a country lane, we drew up outside an old farmhouse which some English friends had converted into a delightfully comfortable home. The Parkers were friends of long standing and I had chosen their house as a temporary refuge on purpose, because I knew that it was off the beaten track and that for a night or two it would be unnecessary for me to register with the police, which I should have had to do had I been staying in an hotel.

After a warm welcome and some drinks and sandwiches we went straight off to bed, tired after the long run and sleepy with the super-abundance of fresh air.

Jumping out of bed next morning I stood at the open window breathing in the delicious mountain air and looking out on a scene so satisfying that I was almost afraid of the intense joy which it gave me. There was nothing very remarkable in the view that I contemplated with such pleasure—it was typical of any alpine valley—and had neither the majesty of Kashmir nor the colour of Transylvania—and yet there was in its very simplicity and unassuming aspect a charm quite inimitable and a homeliness which always warmed my heart. Fields gay with flowers stretched like a Paisley shawl to grassy banks from which firs and larches rose in ever-mounting tiers to a very blue sky. Through a gap in the trees, their jagged peaks soaring above the wooded hillside the great mass of the Kaisergebirge made an impressive outline, while just below my window a grey mare and a pony were grazing contentedly.

To-day, I thought, we'll be up in the hills away from it all, and to-morrow we'll climb—climb all day and sit on top of the



world. Jove, it's good to be alive! Why does one worry so, I wonder? After all it's a grand world and the higher the fewer, like the mouse when it spins! I wonder if Clare's awake? I must dig her out and make her come for a swim.

The water in the pool was limpid and cold and we splashed about in it happily before sunning ourselves on the edge and enjoying the first cigarette of the day.

"I wouldn't mind living here for the rest of my life," I said, and at that moment John Parker came by for his morning dip and overheard me.

"So you like our rural residence, do you? It's rather a sweet spot but it's very quiet, you know. No routs and balls in this little backwater!"

"Personally I'd rather have the peace and quiet as a permanency and the social orgies a yearly event than vice versa."

"That's what Grace says, and I must own that when Kitzbühel is in the throes of its season we avoid it like the plague."

"I don't blame you," said Clare, "and it must be worse than ever since the German tidal wave."

"I'm simply dreading having to go in there this morning," I said. "I suppose that entrancingly picturesque high-street will be packed with buxom Berlinerinen bulging out of skittish *dierndls*!"

"That's about it, and every table in the cafés will be occupied with Ley's leisured laddies getting their strength through joy by guzzling platefuls of cream which they haven't seen for years in their fat-famined fatherland."

"I hear that they're stripping the country like a hoard of locusts. Is it true?" Clare asked.

"Good lord, yes! I'm continually meeting cars on the Munich road with a full-sized pig strapped to the hood."

"Heavens, how revolting! and how beastly cruel."

Parker laughed. "Oh, not a live one! Mrs. Cahn. Usually nicely cured, all ready!"

"But are they allowed to take all that stuff out of the shops?"

"No, they're not; but about half a dozen of them go to the butcher's in a body and swear that they're all members of the same family and insist that they are entitled to so much a head. The assistant is generally so intimidated that he gives them anything they ask for, and anyway, they've always got every-

thing worked out to the last farthing and quote some blasted by-law if there's any protest. I was in the dairy the other day and some youths came in and demanded four glasses of milk. When charged the usual price of 10 pfennigs a glass they refused to pay on the ground that they had consumed a litre between them, the fixed price for this amount being 33 pfennigs. The owner of the dairy was furious but could do nothing except tell them that if they came again they could drink the milk out of the bottle. Even then they got the better of her, for she told me that they returned the following day armed with a tin mug apiece!"

"I'm not in the least surprised," I said. "I know when I stayed with my German family one of the things that astonished me most was the way that they cheated within the law as if it were the most natural thing in the world."

"What d'you call cheating within the law?"

"Well, for instance, a man gets on an automatic weighing-machine and then lets another join him. Obviously the difference between where the needle first stops and where it eventually registers is the second person's weight. With kids whose combined weight doesn't go beyond the capacity of the machine, I've known parents weigh three or four for one coin!"

"And then they say that the only cheque a Scotsman cares to draw is on his plaid!"

"I thought that he could only draw a cork!"

"And no mean accomplishment either! But look here, talking of corks makes me thirsty and I know breakfast's on the table. Go and make a start. I'll join you in a minute; I'm only going to swim to the end and back."

An hour later I had left for Kitzbühel and by lunch-time I was back at the farm, thankful to be away from the fussy importance of a tiny provincial town pathetically anxious to exhibit its attractions to critical and exacting overlords. It was indeed a different Kitzbühel from the quaint musical-comedy village of my recollections where bronzed young mountaineers in sky-blue jackets sat day-dreaming in the sun and fat old farmers with immensely long beards and immensely long pipes cheated each other at Taroc over the wooden-topped tables. Now, all was bustle and efficiency and at every street corner I was greeted by a placard ordering my existence or interfering

with my freedom. Here it was forbidden to park; there it was forbidden to drive; at one door it was forbidden to enter; at another, to leave. Jews, of course, were forbidden altogether. I sighed as I watched a policeman directing the traffic at the cross-roads. In my day there had been no traffic, and my only encounters with the police had been when I had lost something which I invariably found in their charge when I went to claim it.

As I passed the bank a large charabanc was just taking on its passengers for a trip to the Gross-Glockner. I watched a tub-like man in a tussore suit push in in front of his wife and take the corner seat by the window; I listened while a typical commercial traveller in a conspicuously new and incongruous Styrian outfit ticked off the newspaper-boy in an overbearing manner because the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had not yet arrived, and heard with glee the prompt retort that if he wanted the paper early he had only to stay in Frankfurt to get it! I winced as the breezy conductor assisted one of the female tourists into his vehicle with a resounding slap on the most rotund portion of her anatomy and I shuddered as the little street was shattered with the hearty "Heils" of the departing sightseers obediently echoed by those members of *Ein Volk* who happened to be within earshot.

Am I, I asked myself, as the tail of the coach disappeared through the sixteenth-century gateway, being insufferably snob-bish? Why shouldn't these people enjoy their holiday in their own way? Do I look down on those who joy-ride in charabancs and tour the countryside in hoards? No, I thought, it certainly isn't that. I've joined such parties many times in my younger days and I have every respect for the holiday-maker who prefers to take his vacation as one of a crowd rather than in solitary grandeur. I cast my mind back to my last leave when already Kitzbühel was enjoying a growing reputation as a summer resort. Yes, there had been coachloads of tourists then, too, starting off from the bank on a trip to the Gross Glockner, for it was almost five years to a day since Dollfus had performed his last public service by opening the famous road. What then was the difference? Why should a car full of people irritate me in 1939 and not in 1934? I tried to recall the scene more precisely as I had witnessed it in those far-off days. There had been a motley crowd, I remembered, laughing, joking, chatting, and obviously

thrilled at the prospect of the drive before them. They had been a light-hearted happy party, essentially *gemütlich*, well-mannered and, above all, friendly. And this coachload that I had just seen off? No, they were not lighthearted, they were certainly not polite, and they were far from being friendly when it came to the give and take for the best seats. Their gaiety was forced. The outing, to them, was their legitimate right, and they viewed the prospect of the drive not with the pleasurable excitement of a unique excursion and with heartfelt admiration for a glorious feat of engineering, but with satisfaction at the thought of inspecting this latest (quite creditable!) German acquisition with smug complacency. The holiday-makers of 1934 had gone off on their trip each and all of their own free will because they wanted to see and enjoy the unbelievable beauty and majesty of that superb alpine pass. Those of 1939 had been organized and drilled for the tour they were to make. The Glocknerstrasse was one of the "sights" on the programme, and as such was to be visited, photographed, and admired—by order! No wonder that this dictated wayfaring riled me and that I felt that there was something almost obscene in the vulgar manner of the undertaking.

I thought of the memorial above the Fuschertorl on the northern escarpment and of how the little Chancellor had blessed this mighty effort of his little country. A yawning hole in the floor which had once recorded the event, the swastika-covered bronze relief on the wall, and the erasure of the inscription in the porch of the church at Heiligenblut where he had paused to pray, all told of a determined effort to remove any traces of one of Austria's most devoted sons. But for all that, through the open arch where he had taken his last look at it, the double peak of the great snow-capped mountain stood serene and undisturbed just as in the days when it had commanded a full view of much of the Holy Roman Empire, and the prayers which he had offered up for his much-loved land in the little alpine village were laid on a foundation even firmer than that of the rock upon which the church was built and from which his enemies had tried to efface his memory. Dr. Englebert Dollfus, I said to myself, Nazi masons may dig up the foundation stones which you have laid, but you have associated your name with two symbols of eternity which they can never obliterate!

## CHAPTER VIII

*Auf den Bergen ist Freiheit.*

SCHILLER

"WELL, how did you get on?" Clare was waiting for me impatiently on the steps of the arched terrace that the Parkers had converted into a loggia, and where an inviting-looking meal was spread. I gave her the thumbs-up sign as I pulled the Ford into the shade and between mouthfuls of fried chicken and cranberry salad I regaled the household with the tale of my highly successful morning's work.

"Mrs. Turnbull was grand; no flies on that woman! I think her motto in life must be: 'Ask no questions and you'll be told no lies!' Anyway, she rang up her local Carter Paterson, Sunday and all, and he's fetching the trunk to-morrow. She filled up the forms in front of me just verifying Mary's exact address, and when I asked her what she was going to put under 'contents,' since she'd never seen the inside of the box, she wrote 'worn personal effects' without a moment's hesitation."

"I suppose it *is* clothing?" she asked me, and when I hesitated she said: "Well, I mean there isn't a Holbein or a pearl necklace, is there?" from which I gathered that she was not entirely an amateur at despatching unaccompanied luggage from the Ostmark!"

"How perfectly splendid! I hope to goodness she doesn't get into a mess or anything. Will the customs ask questions, d'you think?"

"Shouldn't think so, and anyway she seems to be a lady of some imagination, for she got me to write a letter as from Mary asking for the trunk to be sent—"just to put on my files" she remarked cryptically, and she seemed quite amused at my efforts to produce what I imagined to be an educated feminine hand!"

"Well, all I can say is, that if Emmi isn't able to pawn her miniver after this, you'd better give up reading thrillers, Jug, because your activities in the past week make *Peter Wimsey* look like *Eric, or little by little!*"

I spent the afternoon in a hammock, ostensibly reading, and Clare took the Parkers' cocker for a walk. After tea we said good-bye to our hosts and armed with rucksacks and climbing tackle we set off for our little Gasthof in the mountains.

We had hardly driven more than a few hundred yards along the main road than we were hailed by a farmer's wife who evidently wanted a lift.

"*Gott sei dank!*" she exclaimed as she settled the folds of her voluminous *Innthal* costume and steadied the heavily-braided straw hat upon her piled-up plaits. "I've been signalling every car that passed for the last twenty minutes, but each time I raised my hand the idiots seemed to think that I was giving them the German salute!"

Clare and I burst out laughing. The idea of the poor old body with her button-boots and her basket of eggs solemnly standing at the side of a dusty road on a hot afternoon just for the pleasure of greeting the passing cars, seemed too good to be true, and yet true it most assuredly was. When she had told me where she wanted to be set down she remarked that I didn't seem to be from these parts and where did I hail from? I told her: England.

"Oh, England?" she said, "*England!* Then you won't be for Hitler either!"

I agreed with her that I was not, and suggested that she didn't sound over enthusiastic about the Führer herself. She gave the jewelled dog-collar about her throat a little pat and smoothed the brocade apron on her lap.

"No," she said quietly, "we of the Tirol do not care for someone who sets himself above the Lord God."

I stopped at the "Bear" in St. Johann and handed her out, and she thanked me for the lift graciously but with much dignity, rather in the manner of the *grande dame* to whom the honour of conveying and being conveyed are regarded as equal distinctions.

"What a pet!" said Clare as we sailed past the newly built barracks. "She reminds me of a grand old girl I once saw make a terrific rumpus at Gerngross's in Vienna."

"What happened?"

"She came into the store in her Sunday-go-to-meeting *Pinz-*

*gauer* costume, complete with an enormous green umbrella and started rummaging about in the furniture department examining everything. You know what these *Bäuerinnen* are like—they have that slow, deliberate way of looking things over—and the pretentious young city shopwalker in charge got annoyed with her pottering around for ages and her innumerable questions, so when she asked him the price of a large cheval-glass he replied in a superior voice that he didn't think that it would interest her. 'Is that so?' she retorted in an icy tone, and without an instant's hesitation and quite astonishing force she drove her boot straight through the mirror! 'And now, young man,' she went on with the utmost calm, 'perhaps you will care to tell me the value of this piece?' It turned out that she was one of the richest land-owners in her district and that she was proposing to refurnish her entire hotel!"

"What a tableau! I'd have given a lot to have seen it. I can just visualize it, though. These yeoman families look like something out of the ark, but when you talk to them you find that they're not only efficient farmers tracing their history back hundreds of years, but that they know most things worth knowing that have happened in that time, and that they are far better informed than you as to the principal products of, say Venezuela or Zanzibar!"

By this time I had branched off the main road and was winding my way up a little mountain pass not intended for car traffic but which the local authorities permitted one to use at one's own risk and upon paying a toll. Soon we reached a gap passing right through the foothills of the giant range, and as we bumped along the narrow cart-track bordered with mossy turf which in the spring is thick with gentians, we might have been in another world; a world so quiet and still, so clean and fresh, so young and unsophisticated, that it seemed a crime to break the peace with the throb of an engine and to defile the pure air with carbon-monoxide. I drove along the road as quietly as I could so as not to throw up the dust or frighten the goats which we passed from time to time, and I had to stop several times to allow Clare to get out and open the gates controlling the cattle and the grazing. At last the narrow defile came to an end and we emerged into a broad valley which swept upwards until it

ended in the vast granite rocks which seemed to rise almost sheer above our heads and above the little farmhouse standing in an orchard at their foot.

There was quite a commotion as we got out of the car. We were immediately surrounded by the family to whom the place belonged and whose united voices were drowned by the barking of dogs and the squawking of chickens who seemed determined to join in the general welcome. The farmer was the first to greet us, and I noticed with amusement that his appearance had not changed one whit from my recollection of him. His collarless shirt was still open to the waist, exposing his muscular and hairy chest, and he still seemed in imminent danger of losing his trousers, which were several sizes too big for him round the waist and hung literally by a single thread to very extended braces in the most alarming manner. He smiled his toothless smile and rolled his wall-eye at me and I wondered again as I had wondered before what his handsome wife saw in him, but I knew that he was a kindly, good-hearted fellow, and reflected that after all it's as well that we haven't all the same tastes or there'd be no sale for fancy waistcoats!

We soon dumped our rucksacks and gear, and having put the car in a barn we decided to take a stroll before dinner. We walked in silence for about half an hour along a winding path which followed a splashing stream until we reached the moor-like expanse which forms the lower slopes of the mountains. Only those who have seen these wild alpine valleys can have any conception of the breath-taking beauty of the shadows cast in the evening light on the green turf from feathered larches and towering rocky walls. It is a beauty which is so intense as to be sometimes rather awe-inspiring. On this particular evening I felt half-scared at the loveliness all round me, and Clare voiced my feelings by saying suddenly:

"It's *too* beautiful!"

"That's exactly what I feel; but the thing is—too beautiful for what?"

"I don't know. Perhaps too beautiful to leave."

"I believe you're right. If one could be sure of keeping and holding the beauty it would be all right; but as it is, the fleeting glimpses which we get and the illusive contacts which we make



are so short-lived for most of us that instead of being able to enjoy fully some soul-satisfying scene we ruin the precious moments that we are granted by making comparisons with some drab picture that is our daily lot or by meditating gloomily on the transitory nature of our existence which often forbids more than a passing glance at the things we most admire. There's always the fear, I think, with anything that stirs you profoundly by its beauty, that you're going to lose it; and somehow the fear of loss always seems to make itself felt more strongly than the joy of possession."

"I feel the loss of these mountains very strongly, and above all I feel the loss of the valley. It's too sweet and pleasant a creation to be owned by people who deny the Creator."

"That's true enough, and the same applies to you, Clare!"

"To me?"

"Yes, to you. You're far too sweet a creation to be allowed to go to seed in such a country, and I intend to move heaven and earth to get you transplanted to a better soil! Only you must help me; I can't uproot you by brute force—or at least I don't want to be obliged to!"

"But where do you want to move me to?" said Clare, half laughing until she saw the expression on my face, when she added soberly: "You're not serious, by any chance?"

"I was never more serious in my life; and as to *where*—well, almost anywhere you like so long as it's away from here!"

"But, dear old thing, you know quite well that it would be impossible even if I wanted to be a party to your removal scheme, and I'm not altogether sure that I do."

"I don't accept the word 'impossible' where you're concerned, and d'you mean to tell me that you *like* your present surroundings?"

"I never said that!" said Clare quickly, "but sometimes you have to put up with things that you don't like."

"I don't see why you should have to put up with it," I argued hotly; "it's all wrong my dear; nobody should be asked to make such sacrifices. It's all wrong for a woman like you to be cooped up with a lot of fanatics, surrounded by persecution and restrictions of every kind; not even allowed to sing the songs you fancy, nor read the books you like! Why, good heavens! it's

intellectual suicide! Never a free thought, never a free action, always wondering if it will be all right to do this or that—it's terrible to see you like this, Clare, and when I think of you as I've always known you, full of pep and *joie-de-vivre*, carefree, and happy, and I realize that you have to go back to that stifling prejudiced, fear-laden atmosphere with which these modern Siegfrieds have polluted the air you breathe, I could burst into tears with rage and exasperation!"

"Don't fuss yourself into a fit, there's a good boy!" said Clare, piloting me to a mossy log and fishing my pipe out of my pocket and matches out of her own. "It isn't quite as bad as all that," she continued as I obediently plugged the bowl, "you can see for yourself, I get away sometimes."

"Away! Sometimes! Yes, but not where you belong, not to your own people. Listen, dear, this life is getting you down. I can see that the continual strain is beginning to wear on you, and one of these days you'll have a breakdown. You must get away before that happens, you *must*! Come back to India with me, Clare, just for a year or even for six months, to make a break. There's not a great deal to offer, and you'd miss your music, I expect, but the climate's quite good and you could get riding and fishing and shooting, and you'd have no servant worries, which you will have as soon as Elsie goes."

"Oh, Jeremy Fisher!" she said with a sigh, "you don't have to tempt me, you know how I love all those things; why, I might even shoot a leopard!"

"You might! We keep quite a number in our jungle; and it's just because I know that you would love all that part of the life out there that it would be so good for you, but above all it would be good for you to be free. Free all day and every day, to do and say and think just what you liked!"

"Wouldn't it be marvellous—just imagine getting away from this nightmare and waking up to a new day with a sense of enjoyment! Think of being with normal, kindly people again, and being able to talk as much as one liked! Oh, Jug, now and again I feel I'd do anything to be rid of it all, *anything*!"

"Then you will come?" I tried to keep the excitement out of my voice and made a third effort to keep my pipe alight.

"You know I can't! How can I? There's Conrad."

"Damn Conrad!"

"It's all very well to damn the poor fellow, but after all he's my husband!"

"Yes, worse luck!"

"Jeremy!" Clare's whole voice and look were one huge reproach.

"Oh, I know, I know," I said irritably, "I mustn't say that sort of thing! Well, I'm going to say it; I'm sorry, but there it is, and if you were more honest with yourself you'd be saying 'worse luck' too! You know perfectly well in your heart of hearts that your marriage hasn't been a complete success. You're not really happy with Conrad, you're just making the best out of a bad job. You're too proud to admit it, but you can't fool me and you never have done so, not even at the beginning. Of course, what you should have done——"

But what Clare should have done was never revealed, for at that moment she buried her face in my linen jacket and to my utter consternation started weeping silently.

"That's done it!" I thought to myself, "what an ass I am!" And then I began to wonder if, after all, it was not rather a good thing to have released all that pent-up misery. Tears are healing, or so we are told, and there were enough of them trickling down my neck to mend a dozen wounds.

"Don't cry, Mrs. Muggins—I mean do, if it helps, but don't break your heart like that, it always did upset me and besides we haven't got enough hankies between us—here, take mine—it's not over-clean but it's better than that silly little affair of yours. Cheer up, we'll get that leopard yet!"

I patted her all over her back with decided thumps in unexpected places, as I had done when she was in trouble as a child. It did not end in her laughing as it had then, but I noticed that she still had the trick of handing me back a sodden handkerchief as soon as she had no further use for it.

"I didn't know you knew," she said, in a rather muffled voice.

"Well, naturally I was terribly anxious for you to be happy, and naturally I watched to see if you were. I soon knew that there was something wrong, but it was difficult to know exactly *what*. You were never in love with Conrad, were you, Sis?"

"No, that's just the trouble. Clever of you to guess. Oh, Jug, people who consider that the happiest marriages are where the

husband and wife are 'good friends' are either fools or liars. Good friends! As an aftermath, perhaps. I dare say that companionship *is* happiness in mellowed matrimony, but to be married to someone however fond, however devoted, without the 'first fine careless rapture' is such a hollow imitation of the real thing that I find it harder to endure than plain indifference."

"But what on earth made you marry Conrad if you weren't in love with him? It's not as if he were made of money or as if he'd been a great catch, or something, and you could have married anyone; why, they were all round you like bees round a honey-pot!"

"I don't know. Perhaps because he was so different. You see, I'd never come across anyone in the least like him. He was so good and kind and thoughtful. He never seemed to think of himself at all, and of course he never does. I was used to the usual young man about town, some clever, some good at games, most of them nice, but nothing *to* them, if you know what I mean. There was something great about Conrad. You felt: here's a man! I admired him tremendously and I was fascinated by his character and his purpose. Perhaps it was the 'purpose' that did it! When Conrad has made up his mind it's awfully difficult to say him 'nay.' And then he has personal charm—you must admit that, so altogether I thought that I was very lucky when he asked me to marry him, and in a way I have been. No one could wish for a sweeter, kinder husband, and I still admire him, perhaps more than ever, and I've had a happy, contented life with very few worries up till the last six months. So you see, really I've absolutely nothing to complain of, in fact, hundreds of women would envy me, and quite a number do!"

"And yet in spite of all this, deep down you've not been happy!"

"That's my own fault. I mean I can't help it; I'm made that way. It's just unlucky that's all. When I married Conrad, I told myself that I should probably fall in love with him. People often do, I believe, especially with very devoted husbands; the continual love on one side gradually attracts love on the other. With me, though I have always been very fond of Conrad—no one could help that, I have never been the least in love with him. At first it was just rather disappointing, and I felt that

my life was incomplete, but I didn't let it worry me, as I told myself that probably I was not the kind to fall in love at all, and that very likely life was much more peaceful and pleasant without the disturbing emotion of a '*grande passion*.' And then all at once everything became very difficult and I was really unhappy——"

"That, of course, was when you fell in love with Poniatowsky!"

"Good lord! You don't mean to say that you know about that, too?"

"My dear, certain of your acquaintances were very careful to keep me informed! Viennese society is no different from any other; it loves a scandal!"

Clare snorted and threw back her head.

"It must have been bitterly disappointed, then," she said dryly.

"Yes, no doubt it was. You behaved very well over that affair, Clare, my dear, and I commend you."

"It was touch and go," she admitted frankly. "I very nearly ran off with him. I was very, very much in love. I've got over it now, of course; it was ages ago, and I'm glad I didn't do it, because I don't believe that Wsevelod would ever have made me happy, and he was the kind of man that quickly tires of a woman, I know that now; all the same it was hell at the time and it didn't make my relations with Conrad any easier. I'd had a taste of passion, and it made me realize more than ever that my husband was a companion and not a lover. I loved him the way one loves a child or a rather nice dog, but no one wants to be married to a child or a dog! It's the devil, Jug, and of course it's become increasingly difficult since the *Anschluss*. I suppose that it shouldn't make any difference, but it does. Life under present conditions is only bearable when you share the miseries with the one person who matters. I lose the world all right, but unfortunately not for love! I've tried to stick it, but sometimes I begin to wonder how much longer I can endure it."

"I know, and that's why I repeat that it's vitally necessary for you to get away. It's even worse than I thought it was."

"But I can't go away *now*! It would be horribly cruel to leave him when he's lost so much already and when he can't even forget his troubles in his work. Besides, if I left Conrad now,

everyone would say that I'd cleared out because I couldn't face living with a Jew!"

"Does it matter what they say?"

"It matters because it would be another insult heaped on his wretched, defenceless head."

"Couldn't Conrad be persuaded to leave Vienna?"

"I've been trying for months to get him to say that he would agree to emigrate to the States, but the trouble is that he won't desert the small Jewish practice that he has left. He says that if he goes his patients will have no one to look after them, but I've been hunting round and I've made contact with a young Jewish doctor, who I *think* would do to take over. Conrad will want to train him, but still, perhaps in time——"

"Listen to me, Clare. There must be none of this 'in time'! You're on the right track, but you must act right away and not just leave things to work themselves out. You say that you think Conrad would be willing to train this young doctor? Good! Well, that would keep him pretty occupied, wouldn't it? I mean that he would have something definite to do within a given time—that's important. He mustn't think that you're just clearing out, as you put it, deserting him, in fact, but that you've gone away so as to prepare the ground for him, to make a new home for him, to help him make a fresh start. Don't you see?"

"I see all right. So will Conrad! You don't imagine that we can fool him, do you?"

"But are we fooling him? I mean I'm willing to give up all idea of your coming to India if I can only get you out of this mess. Couldn't you really genuinely go to the States and use your father's influence to get work for Conrad?"

"Silas G. has already suggested that we should go to him, and he's willing to sign the affidavit for Conrad."

"Good gracious! you never told me that! What are you waiting for, then?"

"If I go to America without Conrad, I shall be alone and independent for at least six months. I shall revel in the freedom. I shall be with 'my own kind,' which is what you keep harping on, in fact it will be heaven, and the point is—shall I be able to come to earth again? In other words, once having left Conrad, shall I have the courage to go back to him again? I rather doubt it, and that's why I'm afraid to take any drastic step."

"In other words, you're thinking of no one but Conrad?"

Clare looked at me surprised and it was evident that she did not understand my meaning.

"Well, there's only him and me to think of," she said, "and for once I consider that he deserves priority!"

"That's just where you're wrong! You've forgotten something very important, and that important thing is *me*!"

"You?"

"Yes, me! What about your old brother, doesn't he count for anything? Oh, he does! Well, why should he spend sleepless nights half distracted with worry, and wear himself to a ravelling, when a simple action on your part would relieve him of all his anxiety? Don't you think it's rather hard? Clare, dear, I'm in deadly earnest though perhaps I don't sound like it. I've never in my life asked you to do anything for my sake. I'm going to ask you now. Perhaps it's taking an unfair advantage of your affection for me; I don't know, and I don't much care, because I'm pretty desperate. Little sister of mine, for the sake of those wonderful bonds of love and friendship which have always held us so close together will you do something to make me really happy? Will you go to the States and leave Conrad to follow?"

Clare drew in her breath sharply. She stared in silence at the long purple shadows as if in their dark beauty she could find the answer to her problems. Suddenly she straightened her back and jerked her head up as though she were throwing something off her shoulders. She looked me straight in the eyes and met the appeal in them unflinchingly, and I knew that the battle was won.

"All right, Jug," she said quietly, "I'll go."

I put my arm round her and kissed her on the grey hairs that had caused me so much pain and anguish.

"We'll make plans later," I said. "Thank you, dear, and pray God you won't regret it. And now, don't let's think of it any more. Let's enjoy ourselves for the next few days as only we know how. Shall we?"

She nodded, and we walked back down the lovely valley hand in hand.

\* \* \* \*

For two days we reached those giddy heights both real and metaphorical which are known only to ardent climbers.

They were days so perfect that we hardly knew if we had lived them or if they had existed only in our dreams. Monday, we climbed the Predigtstuhl, spending the night in the Gaudemus hut perched up in the range like an eagle's nest, and Tuesday we tackled the Ellmauerhalt, the ultimate goal of all those who climb in the Kaisergebirge. We felt justifiably proud of ourselves for it is no mean feat and we were not really in training. It was while we were resting our weary limbs and aching muscles and planning a final, short climb for the morrow that the Parker's garden-boy appeared in the courtyard of the farmhouse. It was almost a week since Kari's escape from the Gestapo, and I knew at once that something was wrong, for John would hardly have sent up a message unless he considered it to be imperative. The note was short and to the point. We were to ring up Conrad at the Werners' on a matter of extreme urgency. The fact that he had asked us to call up at the Werners' was a sure indication that something was afoot and that he was afraid of having his own line tapped.

We wasted no time in speculation, for it was already after six, and as soon as we had made our hurried farewells and bundled our traps into the car, we set off again down the pass. It had been so unexpected and such a scramble that I hardly realized that we had left until I saw Clare pause with her hand on the gate that she was opening and look back along the narrow cart-track. We were at a bend in the lane and it was from here that one had one's first or last view of the little farmhouse. I jumped out of the car and we stood together leaning on the gate, each of us, I think, photographing on our memory the sloping roof, the carved balcony full of geraniums, the tiny belfry, the orchard, and the jagged granite peaks, which were so symbolic of the past with its peace and its security. At the moment it seemed to be slipping through our fingers, but oddly enough I felt no anguish. I had the feeling that we were not really leaving the *Bauernhof*. It was as if its peace and its security were now part of our lives, and that they would go with us wherever we went. I took Clare's arm and she gave a little sigh that held more regret than sadness, and then turning, she walked briskly towards the car, the business-like set of her shoulders showing me very clearly how firmly she had put behind her the Valley of the Griesenau.



## CHAPTER IX

*Hé, mon ami, tire-moi de danger—*

LA FONTAINE

By eight-thirty that evening I knew vaguely why it was that Conrad wanted me, but I didn't know that it would tax all my daring and ingenuity to carry out what was expected of me. It was obvious that he was trying to tell me something but the line was very bad and I could only catch the gist of what he was saying, and even then it didn't convey very much to me. He spoke in English and referred to his epileptic friend who was on his way to stay with the Parkers and whom he wanted me to look after. Realizing that no such person was expected, I asked at what time this guest was due to arrive and was told on the early morning mail at the nearest station. "He will give you all my news," said Conrad, "and please meet him and do everything you can for him. He is a very sick man and needs a lot of care. Can you hear me? Yes, I said *care*." I promised that I would do all I could and Conrad told me to tell Clare to stay and help me as she would probably be needed. I communicated the substance of the telephone conversation to the others and told the Parkers that it looked as if they were about to be landed with some sick friend of Conrad's and that there was so much secrecy about it that it was probably some wretched Jew who was being threatened with deportation to a camp. I hoped that they didn't mind and that it wouldn't be for long.

"It's Paul Arnheim," said Clare with conviction, "and if he's on the run then it's pretty desperate."

"But why should it be?"

"Didn't Conrad say: 'my epileptic friend'? It's obvious that he meant Paul."

"By jove, of course! What a fool I was not to twig; but I never thought of Arnheim somehow; I'd forgotten all about him."

"I hadn't, and I know that Conrad hadn't. That's the one man above all others he'd like to see safely away. Paul's a very great scientist, you know, and he has a lot of influence in Switzer-

land and in the States. The Nazis know that he's got a pack of inventions in his head; that's why they're so anxious to keep him in the country and force the formulas out of him and why he took refuge in the sanatorium. He was comparatively safe there as long as he was 'certified,' which you know Conrad did to protect lots of people who were 'wanted,' but I heard that pressure was being brought to bear on Halbern to have Paul sent to another institution, and we can make a guess that the new asylum was to be Dachau! He must have got wind of it and have managed to get away, and I expect the police are in full cry otherwise Conrad would never have suggested his coming here without first asking permission of John and Grace. I imagine that this is the only chance he has of not being traced before making a dash for the frontier."

"But if there's a hue and cry how the devil will he get over any border?"

"I imagine that's where we come in," said Clare dryly.

"We? Good heavens! you don't mean that we're expected to do another of these conjuring tricks?" I asked, flabbergasted.

"I can't think that Paul is coming here just to play bridge, even though he happens to be a first-class player! And then Conrad did say, didn't he, that we were to take great *care* of him?"

"Glory be! so he did; and what's more he said 'care' twice. You're right as usual, Clare, and it seems to me that 'care's' the word all right; if it really is Arnheim, and I believe it is, then it would appear we should be wise to emulate Agag. I feel a bit fussed about John and Grace because it's not quite fair letting them in for this sort of thing and they look like having to hold the baby whether they fancy it or not!"

But the Parkers did fancy it, and came well up to scratch which no doubt Conrad had foreseen, and both seemed eager to co-operate in every way to hide and help this friend if he should prove to be the fugitive we were by now convinced he was.

I sat up far into the night talking things over with John, for though we could obviously make no plans until we had seen the man, certain precautions were equally necessary and we decided that we would leave nothing to chance.

At five o'clock, accordingly, I slipped out of the house and

drove to within some one hundred and fifty yards of the little local station. I parked the car in a small lane and as soon as I heard the train I strolled slowly up the road. In a few minutes I spotted Arnheim (it was the *Geheimrat* right enough), in leather shorts, a tweed jacket and carrying fishing tackle and a large suitcase. There were only two other travellers, locals, and they were some yards ahead of him. As I drew level I murmured: "First lane on the left; back of the car," and passed on over the level crossing and out of sight of the porter and the signalman. Once hidden from view I leapt the adjoining hedge and doubling back through the fields was soon at the wheel of the Ford with Arnheim safely at the back. I then drove straight to the Parker's garage. Here, with the door shut, I had my first word with my old acquaintance of the sanatorium.

"Are they after you?" I asked after he had shaken me warmly by the hand.

"I'm afraid they are; but I doubt if they can have traced me this far, or if they're on my trail at all. The friend who warned me to run for it gave me shelter in Amstetten (it was from there that we made contact with Dr. Cahn), and he took my ticket at the station in case a description had been circulated. I pushed my way on to the night train in the middle of a crowd and I'm pretty certain that no one took any notice of me."

"Well, you'd better stay here in the garage for the moment," I said. "I don't think that the servants ought to see you. Make yourself at home and fix yourself some breakfast. I've put a spirit stove and a saucepan out for your coffee and there's plenty of grub in the tool cupboard over there. Presently Parker and I'll come in and pretend to fiddle with the engine and then we can talk quite safely without anyone knowing who's voices are who's. I'd better lock you in to be sure but we'll be back about eight, so have something to eat and try and get some sleep—there's a rug and a cushion in the back of the car."

"I shall be very grateful for the coffee, but I slept quite well in the train and am not at all tired."

"You *slept*? Good lord! you're a cool customer! I should have been in a fever in your shoes, imagining that every man who came along the corridor was after me."

"If he had been, looking out for him wouldn't have helped

much, would it? Besides, lying asleep in a crowded carriage with a hat tilted over your eyes is almost a disguise in itself. The police, you know, are looking for a guilty fugitive, not an innocent man asleep!"

I looked at Arnheim with curiosity, and the more I looked at him the better I liked him. I saw at once why it was that he was such a friend of Conrad's. Here was the same poise, the same assurance, the same courage; and the grey eyes that looked straight into mine were full of humour and intelligence. I remembered the last time that I had seen those eyes and I could almost visualize the dark shadow of the *Kreisleiter* as it had fallen over the bed like some immense black vulture, hovering, rapacious. I shuddered involuntarily and as I became conscious of fear prickling up my spine the rage which so often accompanied the feeling rushed over me and I felt the blood suffusing my face with sudden anger. I swore violently and banged my fist on the bonnet of the car:

"God damn them!" I muttered savagely, "I'll get these lice off you if it's the last thing I ever do!"

Arnheim looked up quickly. "Conrad said that you were a good friend; I see that he was right. Once and for all may I say 'thank you'?"

"Better wait till you're in Switzerland."

He smiled; a gay, charming smile that was infectious.

"I want to make sure of expressing my gratitude," he said, and it wasn't until I was turning the key on him that I realized the full significance of this remark. As I entered the house I reflected grimly that his chances of leaving German territory alive were horribly slender.

I sat on my bed and started reading through a sheaf of notes which he had pushed into my hand as I was leaving the garage. The first few pages dealt with his adventures during the previous days and related in diary form how he had succeeded in getting away from the sanatorium at night and after tramping the woods for miles, taking his bearing by the stars, how he had got into touch with his friend in Amstetten who had driven over to an appointed *Gasthaus* in an out-of-the-way village where the fugitive managed to join him. This same friend had then contacted Conrad (who directed him to the Parkers), and

after supplying him with fresh clothes and the fishing-rod had seen him safely on to the train from which he had that morning alighted. So far the entries were interesting enough, but it was not until I came to several closely written sheets that I realized why the author had handed them over to me. I read eagerly, and as I turned page after page I became so excited that having come to the end I promptly started reading the whole thing over again. What a man! I said to myself. Fancy thinking all this out down to the last detail, and fancy carrying such a thing around with one! He must either be crazy or else superbly confident. Yes, it's that, I think; unless of course he's too desperate to care much anyway. Well, it looks as if he's saved me a packet of trouble—or else landed me with one—I'm not sure which! but he's certainly a game guy and I'm in on this little party whatever happens. I began whistling to myself (out of tune as usual!), for I felt my spirits leaping up at the prospect of the work ahead, and something about this friend of Conrad's inspired me with immense enthusiasm so that I could hardly possess my soul in patience until I could talk to him again. Realizing, however, that it was likely to arouse curiosity if I were seen pottering around the garage at six o'clock in the morning, I threw myself on my bed and tried to occupy the intervening hours by committing to memory Arnheim's startling plan for his escape.

Immediately after breakfast I returned to the garage with John. We left the door partly open so as not to attract attention, and while he busied himself with the engine which was facing outwards, I lay under the back axle and talked to our friend through a gap made by removing the floor-boards. Soon, everything was settled and I took John off to explain to him the part he was to play in the proceedings. That Clare would have to play her part, too, was evident, as Conrad had foreseen, but Arnheim was anxious that I should not give her all the details of the scheme and John also agreed that the less she knew the better. I felt rather mean not letting her into the whole secret, and it was not that any of us didn't trust either her discretion or her courage, but Arnheim had stressed that it would be safer for all concerned if each of us were told only what was essential for our co-operation. When I got back to the house I informed

Clare that John was going into Kitzbühel to make various arrangements and that we should be leaving for the Arlberg about five o'clock. I told her too that Arnheim had made his own plans for his escape and that we were only taking him as far as Feldkirch after which he would make his way as best he could across the frontier.

"But will he ever get over? They say that the place is bristling with frontier guards."

I shrugged my shoulders. "I think he's got a chance, but obviously the risk is appalling. Anyway he insists on trying to make his escape this way and he's already reluctant to have to involve us at all."

"But that's absurd! I know I'm willing to take the risk, and I'm pretty sure you are too. By the way, why exactly am I coming with you? I'm only too thankful that I don't have to sit behind and wait for news, but if there are several of us isn't there more chance of our being spotted?"

"We want an extra driver—at least it's safer to have one."

"I see. Are we going over the border?"

"Yes. If he makes it, we'll pick him up the other side. His wife's waiting for him in Rapperswil, you know. She was granted her exit papers and wasted no time in getting away."

"It's lucky I've got my American passport."

"Naturally! It'd be impossible otherwise; and it's lucky that I've got mine back again, and just as well that we told Kari to post it here to John; that was a brainwave if ever there was one. Incidentally it's lucky too that it's so full of visas of every description that I don't believe that the authorities will notice that it's been stamped out recently but never stamped in again! If they ask me I'll have to look dumb and murmur something about the wagon-lit conductor having overlooked it and trust they'll do the same!"

"Paul comes with us to Feldkirch, does he?"

"That's the idea. Covered up by the tarpaulin in the back of the car with the luggage. Even if he were not recognized, and he's pretty well known in any ski-ing country, I don't think that the car should be seen with three occupants, and then, when we cross the border, with only two. I don't imagine that the police have the smallest idea which direction he has taken, but they

probably know that his wife's in Switzerland, so you can bet your boots that they'll watch every means of egress into that country like a pack of circus-trained lynxes."

"Doesn't look too hopeful to me."

"He'll need the devil's own luck, I grant you, but with a sporting chance he might do it, and as he's a sporting fellow maybe the gods will be with him. Anyhow, I feel that it's terribly important to be confident. The slightest doubt on any of our parts may wreck the whole thing. Arnheim himself says that we must try to look on the affair as a kind of motor obstacle-race—like the Monte Carlo Rally or something of that sort! and not as a matter of life and death which is apt to give one the jumps. Whether its possible to hypnotize oneself into making a game out of anything so desperately serious I don't know but he seems to think that if you concentrate enough and keep pretending the whole time, your nerves react to it and you remain excited but not panicky."

"It sounds a damn good idea, and I'm going to try it, and pray heaven it works because when I'm all keyed up you know I always get sick and it'll be a fair nuisance to say nothing of a menace if you have to keep stopping the car to let me relieve my heaving stomach!"

"Good lord! I'd forgotten that habit of yours! For mercy's sake take some Nautisan, or whatever it is you do take, and plenty of it. It dopes you a bit too, doesn't it? and that'll be all to the good."

"But what about my driving?"

"Shan't want you till Feldkirch, if then—it's just in case—so don't worry."

"O.K. Anything I can do till five o'clock?"

"Just pack and get ready."

"Right. I'll do your grips too, and then I think I'll go for a huge walk."

"I'll come with you, but I must be back by three. Got to pick up John."

"Isn't he driving himself in?"

"Well——"

"Oh, all right, I won't ask questions!"

"Good girl. Let's start at eleven and take sandwiches."

At two-thirty, hot and tired after a long walk in the midday heat and an uphill climb which had mercifully occupied most of our attention, we returned to the house and I got the Ford out once more, transferring Arnheim to the back of the Parker's car and locking him in again. I had arranged to meet John at a certain milestone on the main road, and I had already waited over an hour and was getting thoroughly fussed when at last he turned up.

"Thank God, you've come; I was beginning to think you'd drawn a blank."

"So did I," he replied. "The man I wanted was away and only came back after lunch. I couldn't appear to be in a hurry—it would have seemed odd in a local—so it had to be several glasses of beer and the usual gossip before I could complete the deal. Sorry to have kept you waiting so long."

"Doesn't matter a hoot so long as you're here now and that you've got what you went for. We couldn't have started without you, anyway, and I only hope that we'll be as successful over our part of the show as you've been over yours."

I put John's purchase in the back of the car where it was soon joined by Arnheim and his suitcase, the whole neatly covered by the large lightweight tarpaulin which I used to protect the car when it had to be parked in the open. To test the efficacy of the precaution we allowed the Parker's servants to put our bags and rucksacks on the remaining floor-space, which they did without so much as a glance at the covered-up humps alongside.

True to schedule we were off on the dot of five, and as we waved back at the end of the drive we both felt a sinking feeling at the thought of leaving behind two such staunch supporters of our forlorn hope.

The hours slipped by. We sped through Innsbruck and out through the long avenue of poplars on the Arlberg road towards Landeck. As we passed through Telfs I suddenly slowed down sharply and then pulled up. We were outside the Bear Hotel.

"The policeman!" cried Clare, immediately reacting to my thoughts; "but you can't stop here, Jug!"

"Can't I?" I replied. "I can and I will!"

"But you'll establish our identity," she said aghast.



"There's no harm in that—in fact it may be a good thing; we're going over into Switzerland quite openly; besides, I have a hunch that a visit here may bring us luck. Arnheim," I whispered, "lie as still as the dead and for God's sake don't sneeze! We're stopping for a drink and I want the landlord to register that there are only two of us."

"O.K." came a muffled but serene voice.

A green-aproned porter asked us if we were stopping at the hotel. I told him that we were not, but that we wanted to see the *Wirt* as we had a message from his son the policeman.

"The Herr Hans? Oh, but that's fine! Won't the *Herrschaften* come in?"

It was obvious that we should have to and I got out and slammed the door in a nonchalant manner and then locked it.

"The car will be quite all right," the man assured me.

"Maybe, but I've got all my luggage in the back and things are not what they used to be; you can't leave a blessed thing about these days."

"That's true, alas! the Herr is right; things are not what they were, still I don't think that anyone would dare to touch anything outside the 'Bear'!"

I offered up a fervent prayer that the illustrious reputation of the "Bear" would act as a deterrent to the closer inspection of the car by curious pedestrians. We were obliged to spend about twenty minutes with the hotel proprietor, who was so delighted at receiving first-hand information about his son that he threatened to launch into an account of every minute of the young man's life, and it was only our insistence that we must get on to Feldkirch that enabled us to get away at all. The landlord remarked on the practical design of the Ford's body as he saw us into it.

"So much better for the springs than having heavy luggage strapped on behind," he observed, peering into the back. I was relieved to see that the only comment after this scrutiny was the remark, several times repeated: "*Sehr praktisch!*"

A mile or so beyond the town with an open road in sight for several hundred yards, we let Arnheim get his head out for a breather and passed him up the bottle of beer that we had purchased. As I handed him a collapsible drinking mug in a leather

case he looked at me with a twinkle and said with his delightful smile: "*Sehr praktisch!*"

It was impossible to remain serious with this light-hearted, cheerful refugee and we had to join in the laugh when he asked if he might turn round and put his other leg to sleep! It was in a half-exultant, half-defiant mood that we sailed over the famous pass and began the long winding descent into the Vorarlberg. The run from Kitzbühel had taken roughly six hours and it was therefore about eleven-thirty when we left Bludenz on the final lap of the evening. We pulled up some two miles out of Feldkirch to allow our passenger to stretch his legs, since it was now quite dark and he could move about without the risk of being seen. We let him walk nearly a mile and then he returned to his hiding place, where he remained unobserved until the car had been safely tucked away for the night in one of the separate boxes with which I knew beforehand that the Lion Hotel was well provided.

Unfortunately these boxes, unlike the garage at the Parkers', had no windows and I realized immediately that it would be impossible to leave him locked up in the stuffy atmosphere until the following evening, which had been the original plan. I asked the hotel porter if he were on duty all night and to my relief he replied that he was just going off and that the night porter would take over.

"In that case," I said, "I'll take the key, because I'm going on an excursion early in the morning and I don't want to drag the night porter all the way over to the garage."

"As you wish, sir. What time will you want to be called?"

"Five-thirty," I replied loudly, hoping that Arnheim would hear that he was to be rescued from the risk of suffocation. "And Madame will ring for her breakfast later," I added, giving Clare a kick on the shin as she was about to protest.

As soon as we had been handed over to the night porter, an old, whiskered gentleman who looked as if he could easily be dissuaded from accompanying me to the garage in the morning, and had had our passports checked, we climbed laboriously up three flights of stairs and were quickly left to the happy remoteness of the top floor. Clare immediately flooded me with questions in a hoarse whisper.

"What's all this about you leaving me to-morrow?" she demanded.

"There's no other way. I forgot about that garage being almost airtight. He can't stay there to-morrow, especially as the weather is so hot; I'll have to get him out and hide him somewhere till it's time for him to make his attempt. I only hope he has some ideas; he knows the country like the back of his hand and I'm counting on him to think of some place where he can lie low until nightfall."

"I see. Then you'll come back, I take it?"

"Well no, I can't do that. You see, the idea is that I should go over into Liechtenstein on foot and reconnoitre the place where we're to meet if he gets over all right. Whatever happens I must be sure of it, and besides I have to leave him food and things which he may need if he's delayed and we miss him. Actually he should be safe once he's across the border but he hasn't got a Swiss visa and if he's caught by the Swiss police they'll hand him back. He's got a cousin at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Berne who'll fix him up once he's in Switzerland proper, but we don't want any silly slip-up just inside neutral territory as it were, once he *has* made his get-away."

"You talk as if it were a foregone conclusion!"

"Do I? Well, then, his Yogi business has worked better than I thought, because I'm beginning to believe that he *will* make it, though I know we haven't even started on the real difficulties yet."

"I'm not exactly pessimistic," said Clare, "it isn't that, but I have a ghastly feeling in my solar plexus and goodness knows how I shall sleep and pass the long hours to-morrow."

"Take a stiff sleeping-draught, and if I were you I'd go for a swim in the morning and after that you can do your part of the day's work. Listen: You'll find the car in the yard of the 'Golden Rose,' out on the Buchs road; bring her back, get her all filled up and then park her where you like. I ought to be back around tea-time. Next, keep your eyes and ears skinned for any Swiss car that looks like stopping off for dinner and going on westwards afterwards. If you can possibly locate one definitely, I mean speak with the owner and know for certain when he's likely to leave for Switzerland, then it may make the

whole difference between Arnheim staking his life on long odds or an even chance."

Clare nodded her head slowly.

"I'm beginning to see," she said. "I suppose it ought to be a car with just one man in it?"

I looked at her quickly. "What makes you think that? Yes, it would be better, actually, and there are packets of commercial travellers driving backwards and forwards at this time of year, but what made you think of it?"

"Pretty obvious, isn't it? Somehow Paul will have to waylay this fellow—cadge a lift or something—and then knock him out and drive over the frontier with the other chap's car and papers. It sounds pretty desperate, but I suppose Paul will try and make himself look like the Swiss; there's no moon—you've thought of that—and if the customs men don't make him go into the guardhouse and scrutinize him, and they don't always with foreigners, he just *might* do it. I must say I should have thought that it'd have been better to get a Swiss friend to come over and lend him the car, much the same way as you did for Kari."

"There isn't time. Every hour that he stays in this country his chance of escape diminishes."

"Oh, so you thought of it, did you?"

"He did; but there was no way of getting a message through quickly—too risky to telephone—and it takes time to organize an escape like that."

"I see. Then I'm right about the method?"

"I can't tell you. I promised not to say a word to a soul, not even you, in case something goes wrong and we're questioned. The less everyone knows the better, and there are some details he hasn't thought fit to tell me."

"All right, you needn't tell me, but as you haven't even contradicted me it's pretty clear. I suppose you're really going over to-morrow morning to make some arrangements for getting rid of the other car and picking him up so as to throw the police off the scent."

"Something like that."

"Well, I'm glad I've got some idea of what's going on. It's simply awful to be in a thing like this and never to know what's happening next, though I still don't quite see where I come in."

"You don't, really, now. You see at first we'd fixed it that you would drive him out to some place from where he'd go off on his own—choosing a good moment, while I was footslogging it back from my part of the business, but as things have turned out I think it's better to get him out of the garage early. So actually now, there's no need for you to be mixed up in it at all after to-morrow evening, and I was thinking——"

"No you don't!"

"Don't what?"

"I mean that if you're thinking of dumping me here, well, nothing doing!"

"But Clare——"

"Don't 'but Clare' me! You thought I could be useful at first; maybe I can still pull my weight, you never know. You might even drive off in one direction with Paul and let me tootle off in the Swiss bloke's four-wheeler in another. I'll guarantee to lead the police half round Switzerland!"

I couldn't help laughing. "You're full of ideas, aren't you? and not half bad ones either! Anyway, should a situation arise as you picture it, you can let Arnheim have your suggestion. That's all I can say. He must decide everything"

"All right, that's settled"

"Yes, and now you go to bed, please. I suppose you know that it's after one o'clock and that I've only got a few hours before I start on this momentous affair?"

"Poor old Jug! I'm sorry, I oughtn't to have 'ept you so long talking. Well, get to sleep, dear, and rest all y u can, and let the future take care of itself."

That the future was about to weigh in the balance the lives of all mankind, we had no idea, which was perhaps fortunate, since if we had, doubtless the task in hand of saving one life from the grip of Nazi power would have seemed so futile and insignificant as to be hardly worth the risk, the determination and the energy which we were concentrating on our efforts to succeed.

## CHAPTER X

*Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*

CICERO

I SLEPT like a log in spite of my many preoccupations, and it seemed to me that I had only been asleep a few minutes when the old porter knocked at my door and brought me my coffee, but after a bath and a shave I was completely refreshed and as a shirt and leather shorts do not take much time getting into, I was soon crossing the stable-yard with my rucksack on my back. The garage was stuffy even after so short a time and Arnheim was palpably relieved to see me. There was not a soul about, so I was able to drive out unobserved and I instinctively took the road to Bregenz since it seemed ill-advised to get closer to the frontier, and I was reluctant to make any retrogressive movement. As soon as we were clear of the town I asked my passenger what he thought we ought to do.

"Drive along here for about five miles," he said, "then turn right over the railway, the road climbs for a bit and at the top of the rise, if I remember rightly, there should be a path to the left. It's only a narrow lumber-track and pretty steep, but you should be able to get the car up it. There are no corners and it brings you out at the thickest part of the forest where there are the remains of a disused sawmill. The only people likely to pass that way are hikers or perhaps an occasional peasant, and anyway up in the loft there's room enough to hide twenty people."

"Trust you to know a good hideout," I said, relieved; "well, here goes!"

The Ford was in a good mood and took the climb like a bird, though her wings scraped the mossy banks as we squeezed up the narrow path. There was plenty of room to turn at the top and I backed her out of sight behind the ramshackle building, and helped Arnheim to carry his suitcase out, stowing away John's famous purchase, which I knew he would need, behind some logs. We sat up in the loft and discussed the final details of the proposed escape while Paul unpacked his bag and dressed himself in the clothes which it contained. I saw that he had bread

and sausage and a bottle of beer and repeated all my instructions to make sure that I had got them quite clear. After returning from my day's excursion into Liechtenstein, I was to drive out after dinner to the "Golden Rose" and sit in the beer-garden which overlooked the road. If no Swiss car with a solitary occupant passed going westwards between ten thirty and midnight, or if Clare had been unable to make certain of a traveller and identify him, then I was to return to the hotel and repeat the proceeding the following evening, but if the car passed then I was to follow it over the frontier and make for the rendezvous which I would already have located in the morning and which was clearly marked on the map which Arnheim gave me.

"But how are you going to know whether either the Swiss chap or we have gone?" I asked.

"Leave that to me," he said with a smile, and as I saw that there was nothing further to be got out of him, I pressed his hand and wishing him all the luck in the world, took his suitcase again and scrambled down the ladder.

I parked the car at the "Golden Rose" which was only about a mile from the customs house, and set off by a footpath which I knew would lead me up the nearest mountain and from there across into Swiss-controlled territory. I was curious to know whether I should be stopped by frontier guards of either side, for it had always seemed to me that the easiest way to escape from Austria was to go over the mountains on a dark night, much in the same way that so many Sud-Tirolers had fled over the Dolomites in order to avoid having to fight in the Abyssinian war. Arnheim had assured me that many people had been caught this way and that to avoid running into the extremely watchful Swiss gendarmes required more luck than judgment. Taking note of the high ground near the border I soon realized that to leave the path at night was to invite a broken ankle if nothing worse, and I was just admiring a fine view of the Three Sisters, the highest mountain in the district, after walking about an hour and a half, when a shrill whistle made me start, and looking in the direction of the sound I saw a storm-trooper hurrying towards me. There was a seat some fifty yards farther up from which he could obviously overlook anyone coming in either direction.

"Halt!" he cried. "Where are you going?"

I said "Good morning" in English, politely, and pointing to my map, indicated a hut at the top of a well-known climb.

He shook his head and said: "*Schweiz*" very loudly and in the tone of a man trying to teach a dog a trick.

I replied "*Ja, Ja!*" brightly, and produced my passport.

At this he looked considerably relieved, and having duly observed the immense amount of German visas and decided that so frequent a visitor to the Reich was evidently in the good books of the authorities, he intimated that I might continue.

"*Ausflug*," I informed him in what I considered was a tourist's best German. "*Zuruck Abend!*" at which he grinned, and not to be undone, answered: "O.K." which he pronounced "Aw Keh"! He was very young and apparently rather flustered at having been confronted with a foreigner in such an out-of-the-way spot. As I passed on I reflected that I had had a stroke of luck much greater than any that I had bargained for. My passport had not been stamped. It only required the incoming German endorsement to make the blessed thing completely in order again; a formality upon which I could quite simply insist. Soon the path ran across a wider and more frequented track and here, plumb in the centre of it, a Swiss was patrolling. His examination was more thorough and I was obliged to turn out my rucksack which contained nothing more incriminating than a change of clothes and some food such as any tourist might carry. When I was allowed to proceed I quickened my pace, for the broad path made good going, and by eleven-thirty I had rejoined the main road a few miles beyond the Schanwald barrier. Keeping westwards I plodded on and just as the clock in the neighbouring village was striking twelve I reached my destination. A crucifix and a withered tree covered with ivy were easy landmarks and a gate led into a field just as Arnheim had said it would. Fifty yards away was the small wooden haybarn that was my ultimate objective and beyond it a weed-covered pond completed the identification.

After the hot and dusty walk the cool grass and the shade of the hut were inviting and I decided that I had time for a rest before starting off on the return journey. I had barely propped my head comfortably against the rough woodwork than



I fell soundly asleep. When I woke it was after half-past two and I realized with a shock that I had not intended to sleep at all let alone for over two hours, and that I might well have snored away most of the afternoon and run the risk of upsetting the best-laid scheme by my self-indulged drowsiness. Thoroughly awake now and in a chastened mood I stowed away the rucksack in the hay as instructed and hurried towards the village to find out if there were a quicker way of getting back than by walking. Luckily a 'bus was due at three-fifteen which went to Feldkirch, and I decided to take it. The likelihood of the same officials being on duty at the frontier in the afternoon and at night was remote and even if they did recognize me there did not seem to be much harm in it. All went smoothly. My passport received yet another swastika upon my entry on to German-acquired soil and the examination of the few passengers including myself was brief and uneventful.

When I got back to the Lion Hotel at Feldkirch, Clare was waiting for me and as she immediately suggested tea in a neighbouring café, I gathered that she had news for me. I was right, and it was good news.

"I, too, have not been idle," she said as we settled ourselves in a secluded corner. "I've vamped a glove-manufacturer from Zürich with great success and he's dining with us to-night!"

"What!"

"Well, that's what you wanted, isn't it? He was going off this evening about six o'clock but I persuaded him to stay. All we have to do is to fill him up and keep him talking late!"

"Good lord! I must say you've taken my breath away. I hadn't quite visualized you saddling us with someone for the whole evening."

"But you said I was to make certain of a lone Swiss going over the border to-night, and I have! What more d'you want?"

"It's a grand bit of work—I'm a bit shaken, that's all. I expect it'll be all right, only we have to wait at the 'Golden Rose' after dinner."

"What for?"

"It's a sort of signal."

"You never told me that!"

"Didn't know myself till this morning. But I don't think it'll

matter; it's only a question of timing the thing. We'll have to make a quick get-away ahead of your fellow so as to know when he passes."

"We can always say that we have a date at the 'Rose' and then if he sees the car outside he won't think it's queer that we've parked there, or stop to ask questions."

"Good idea. You think of everything."

"How did your part go?"

"Very well, only that I fell asleep and nearly muffed the whole afternoon!"

"Poor old Jug! You must be deadbeat; all that driving yesterday and tramping to-day. Why don't you have a hot bath and stretch yourself on your bed till dinner time?"

"I think I will. Will you wake me in case I overdo it again?"

"Yes, about eight. We don't want to dine till half-past, it spins the time out a bit."

If I had not been so desperately anxious about the outcome of the evening and oppressed with considerable misgivings, I might have been amused at our little dinner party, with Clare's pick-up. The man was obviously completely captivated by her charms and was as pleased and excited as a schoolboy. He talked incessantly about his home, his wife and his little boy, and when we plied him with wine he became very sentimental, and as Clare kept him to entirely personal subjects his tone became more and more intimate and confidential. I was fidgety and couldn't keep my eye off the clock but Clare appeared to be quite at her ease and every time that Herr Spengli said that he thought he ought to be moving she coaxed him with "just another for the road" and assured him in the most brazen, manner that the road to Wildhaus where it seemed he was due that night, was much easier to negotiate with headlights than in the daytime.

Somehow or other the time passed, and at ten-fifteen I caught Clare's eye. While she was explaining to her boy-friend about our so-called engagement at the pub, I paid the bill and got the engine running. Our bags were already in the car and almost before Herr Spengli had realized that we were bidding him a hearty farewell we were gone.

"Five minutes' start at least," I said. "Good lord! listen to

that! There's going to be a storm." A loud peal of thunder echoed in the mountains as I spoke and almost before we had left the town the first big drops of rain began to fall. It had been excessively hot and heavy all day and in the alps summer storms blow up without any warning, so that one is apt to be drenched to the skin if caught. Streaks of forked lightning and heavier claps of thunder warned us that the storm was almost overhead, and just as we drew up at the "Golden Rose" it began to rain hard.

"Heavens!" I said distractedly, "I never thought of this! What are we going to do now? We were supposed to sit in the garden until your Swiss passed, give him about ten minutes, and then follow, but we can't sit out in the pouring rain."

"Let's go in, then."

"But we shan't see the car pass, and that's the crux of the whole plan."

"Well then, you'd better go in—get a Schnapps or something, and I'll sit in the back of the car and watch out. If he passes and you're not back within a few minutes, I'll tootle the horn."

"Are you sure you'll recognize the car?"

"What do you take me for? It's a grey Buick with the blue and white Zürich shield, and I've got the number here; a two-seater car with a big dickie. I'll back the Ford so that the headlights focus on the road ahead, and then I can read any number going away from me, rain or no rain. Besides, I expect Herr Spengli will slow down when he goes past, just to catch a last glimpse! You know, I'm feeling quite sorry for the poor little man."

"Well, think of Arnheim's wife instead; and don't waste your sympathy on a stranger!"

"But he isn't a stranger; I've spent the whole afternoon flirting with him! Go on, Jug, don't stop to tell me what you think! Hell! the whole sky's coming down; d'you ever know such a deluge? I hope the little beggar doesn't think it's too bad to drive in, and decides to spend the night in Feldkirch."

"Great snakes! what a thought! Oh, *why* did it have to do this? I'm sure it'll muck up the whole show. It really might have waited another hour or so. Look out! here's a car coming—watch it!"

But the car was nothing more exciting than a delivery van, probably turning in our side of the border, and as soon as Clare had climbed into the back I made for the welcome door of the pub. I was glad to put away a double *Vogelbeer*; the raw spirit revived me considerably and I felt my tense muscles relax. I lit a cigarette and tried to sit quietly, but I was in a frenzy to be up and doing. This hanging around was frightful, and it seemed to me that I was standing once again in a cold trench at dawn peering at the luminous minute-hand of my watch which obstinately refused to hurry towards the fatal hour. The short bark of an electric horn broke in on my reminiscences like the report of a gun, and I sprang up in such a hurry that I almost upset the table.

"You've seen him? He's gone? When did he go?" I fired the questions at Clare as I climbed into the driving seat. She answered me with perfect calm:

"To be precise, seven and a half minutes ago!"

"But I haven't been gone as long as that!"

"Oh, yes you have. You went in at ten-forty; I noted the time particularly.

I looked at the illuminated hands of the clock on the dashboard. Now it really was like France again. Thirty seconds—twenty seconds; I let in the clutch; ten seconds—go! It was perhaps lucky that the torrential rain prevented me from tearing along the road at breakneck speed, which I should otherwise have been tempted to do. As it was, the water poured from the windscreen in such a flood that even the wiper was unable to cope with it properly and I had to peer along the road, now dark and wet, in order to keep in the middle of it.

In a few minutes, or so it seemed, a brilliant light casting its beam almost across the entire road told us that the German frontier had been reached. Clare slipped her hand over mine and gave it a squeeze and at that moment an oil-skinned figure stepped out into the glare of our headlamps and held up his hand. I strained my eyes anxiously ahead but could see no other car in sight. We got out and followed the beckoning customs man into the passport shed.

"What a night!" I said, in what I hoped was a friendly tone but which sounded to me suspiciously like a nervous squeak.

"Yes, it's heavy while it lasts, but it'll cool off the air. It's been very stuffy all day."

I noticed with relief that he seemed a jolly, good-natured-looking man, but my rejoicing was short-lived for while he was tearing out the page of my *Carnet* for the car, a grim-faced Nazi emerged from an inner room to check the passports. He scrutinized mine from the first page to the last, and then back again for what seemed to me an eternity, and I was thankful that the "ins" tallied with the "outs," for he did not look the type of man who would accept a vague "I really don't know" as an explanation for an omission. At long last and by the time I was fairly sweating with apprehension, he stamped the overladen page, albeit somewhat reluctantly, and returned me the passport with a gesture of disapproval and saying that it was high time I had a new one.

I had just collected my papers and we were about to leave the German control in order to cross over to the Swiss, when with a terrific roar and splutter a motor-bike pulled up outside, and a man wearing the uniform of the Nazi motor-cycle corps, the rain streaming from his helmet, thrust his way past us at a bound, almost knocking me down in his hurry. After a brief "Heil Hitler" he besieged the customs officer with a torrent of questions rapped out in such a rasping voice that they sounded like the rattle of a machine-gun.

"Have you had a Swiss car through?—One man—what number? what name? How long ago? Quick! I must know—was it grey? Had it a Zürich plate? Wake up! don't sit there gaping!"

The man addressed, dazed at first by this sudden outpouring, was galvanized into action by the ferocious tone of this forceful member of the N.S.K.K. (the Nazi motorized unit) and by the feeling that something was evidently wrong.

"Buick—10542—Zürich. Driver, Spengli," he answered briskly.

"You fool!" yelled the driver, "you goddam fool! It wasn't a Swiss at all! The man's a political prisoner wanted by the police; the car and the papers were stolen—and you let him through!"

"But how could I know?" expostulated the alarmed official.

"The authorities will soon tell you!" snapped the irate trooper.  
"How long's he been gone?"

"Five minutes—ten minutes at the most."

"Is that all? That's better! I'll catch him yet." He rushed to his motor-bike as he spoke and started wheeling it towards the barrier. "Get your Swiss colleagues to help," he shouted over his shoulder; "I'm going to hold the fellow up. Get them to come along."

A few words to the startled Swiss guard and he had pushed his machine through the gap for pedestrians and was off into the night with a roar before the gendarme had time to do anything but shout after him. An immense altercation followed, the Swiss officials and the German all arguing together in a heated manner. Clare, very pale, seized my arm as we stood for a moment on the deserted steps of the German passport office, and clung to me, trembling.

"Oh, Jug, he'll get him! What can we do?"

"Ssh," I said, "don't worry; it might be worse. Come on, keep your pecker up!"

We crossed the road to where the argument was still in full blast and from which we gathered that the Swiss considered that the cyclist had no right to dash through their barrier without showing his papers, whereas the Germans maintained that speed was essential and that it was in Swiss interests since one of their citizens had been robbed and an undesirable had crossed the border with a passport to which he was not entitled. Finally, the Swiss were mollified and the head official went off to telephone to Buchs and Vaduz and the various patrols to have the car stopped if it had not meanwhile been intercepted by the Nazi. The remaining guards were still squabbling mildly, the Swiss insisting that if an arrest was to be made *they* should make it, as the culprit was in their territory.

"That's the idea," said my sour-faced passport officer. "Our man will just hold him up until you fellows come along."

"But how can we chase anyone at this time of night and in this weather?" the others answered.

"Perhaps I can help you?" I put in, and paid no attention to Clare, who was frantically pulling at my sleeve. "Can I give any of you a lift? There's lots of room in my car, and you can bring your bicycles too, if you like!"

"Excellent!" cried the German, eyeing me with favour for the first time. "You'll soon come across him; he can't have got far,

and anyway now that they've telephoned ahead all the roads will be watched."

The Swiss agreed and said that they would be glad of the lift, but that first they must check our papers.

"Good heavens, what a waste of time!" cried the exasperated Germans, "can't you stamp their wretched passports in the car as you go along? They're perfectly in order or naturally we shouldn't have passed them."

After a brief discussion this was agreed upon and two Swiss guards, complete with bicycles and rifles, clambered into the back of the Ford.

"*Sehr praktisch!*" said one of them as he discovered how roomy it was. I saw Clare wince at the familiar words and thought of Arnheim's laughing face as he had uttered them from beneath the tarpaulin.

I drove slowly. In the first place the road was wet and slippery and the visibility still poor; in the second, I was in no hurry, as can easily be imagined. After we had gone a few miles we came to the cross-roads where the right fork leads to Gams. I slowed up but the gendarmes called out "*G'rade aus*—straight on!"

"I know," I replied, "but suppose he turned off here?"

"Then he'll soon be stopped," declared the elder of the two guards. "The chief has telephoned to all posts and there are several patrols between here and the Bodensee, and plenty of troops; besides, it's unlikely he's turned off, as the road to Wildhaus is very bad for a night drive, let alone in this weather."

I reflected silently that that would be an excellent reason to take it if one were on the run, but I said nothing and continued along the main road. In less than five minutes I slowed down again. A peasant with a green *loden* cloak and gnome-like hood bent to the storm was walking along the road.

"Have you seen a car pass this way lately, and a motor-cycle?" I asked as I drew level.

"Yes, a car passed me some way back," he answered, "and about ten minutes ago a cyclist went by at a great rate. I couldn't see him but he splashed me from head to foot. Hi!" he called as I was about to drive on, "I suppose you couldn't give me a lift? It's a terrible night."

"You'll find half the gendarmerie on board, but if they don't mind, I expect there's room."

"Hop in!" called out the Swiss, good-naturedly pulling aboard a large rucksack, "you're in luck—the English Herr is giving half the countryside a free drive to-night."

"Well, it's hardly the evening I'd choose for walking out, either for business or pleasure," I remarked, looking over my shoulder and thinking what a curious collection of passengers I seemed to have picked up. The gendarmes in their grey-green uniforms, their rifles between their knees, were scanning the entries in my *Carnet* by the aid of a pocket torch, while faintly outlined in the dim light I could see the *Bauer's* bushy beard and pointed hood from which the water was dripping into a little pool on the floor.

Before long we came to another cross-road, this time in a village, where the road forked right for Buchs and left for the capital of Liechtenstein.

"Now, which way?" I asked.

"Don't know. We'd better ask. Wait a minute, will you?"

The senior man got out and turned down the first side street. In a few minutes he was back again with a local policeman.

"They've gone to Vaduz," he said; "at least the sergeant here saw a car turn off some little while ago, and he's certain nothing has come along the Buchs road, because he was in the window-seat of the pub that overlooks it and he says he would have noticed the headlights."

"Well, I can't go to Vaduz," I said firmly. "I'm awfully sorry, but I simply must get on and it's much longer that way round, especially at night."

"That's all right, I'm from here," said the gendarme. "We can get my brother's van, he's the baker. Don't trouble any more, we can manage easily."

"Sure?"

"Quite; and thanks for the help."

"You're welcome."

"Good night; a pleasant journey!"

"Good night. Oh—look here, could you be so kind as to ring up your patrol at Buchs to let us through? We're rather late as



it is, and I don't want to be held up and I suppose they'll stop every car that comes along?"

"Yes, certainly. What's your number?"

"FYF 3242—G.B."

"Right. I'll warn them. How far do you want to go?" This to our stray passenger.

"Well," said the fellow, taking a large pipe out of his mouth, "I had not counted on going very far as I am staying with the owner of the Weissbachalm," he pointed vaguely up and ahead, "but if the Herr *could* take me halfway to Sargans then it would save me a long trip in the morning and I should be most grateful."

I nodded, and the guard stuck his head in the window.

"Very well, then," he said, "I'll tell the patrol to pass the three of you. Greig was the name, wasn't it?" He pronounced it like Zweig and I made a mental note to do the same if asked.

He climbed off the step and after an exchange of civilities we drove on into the night. For a few miles Clare said nothing, and then she murmured more to herself than to me:

"Will they get him, I wonder? O God, if only he can get away!"

"You bet he will!" I said cheerfully, and I began humming what I fondly imagined was *Toreador* with very marked rhythm.

"What's come over you, Jug? You look as if you were on top of the world."

"I am, dear. Rum tumty-tum-tum, tumty-tumty-tum. It's worked, Clare, it's worked! Tum tumty-tum, tum tumty-tum. At least, that is if there's no slip-up at Buchs; but I think our friends will pass up the word and it'll be O K."

"You know something! Can't you tell me?"

"As soon as we're on the road to Sargans, I promise. Cheer up, though; things have gone luckily so far, though I admit far differently from what I'd expected."

I was driving faster now. The rain had almost ceased and the road was straight and easy. Just outside Buchs we found the gates of the level crossing closed and the patrol stopped us. They were evidently expecting us, for they made no trouble at all and waved us on.

"I take it as you're still here, no one has come through this way?" I asked.

"No, but I think we've got our man. A car answering to the description has been seen on the Watwil road. It's only a matter of time before it's held up and he's caught."

"Unless the driver abandons the car," I suggested.

"Why should he? He doesn't know he's being followed, does he?"

"That's true. Well, I hope you don't have to stay out till dawn. Good night!"

"Good night," they answered as the barrier was raised.

I negotiated the sharp corner in Buchs and was soon speeding on as fast as the winding road would allow, along the Rhine valley which divides Liechtenstein from Switzerland, when suddenly a voice sounded in my ear.

"Would you stop here, please?" and as I slowed up: "thank you a thousand times."

I pulled in to the side of the road and switched on the light in the roof of the car.

I heard Clare give something between a gasp and a cry and turned round to see the smiling face of Paul Arnheim a few inches from mine! The hood of the green cape was thrown back and in his hand he held an artificial grey beard. He looked at this for a moment in silence and then remarked in a satisfied tone:

"Quite effective, apparently!"

Clare flung her arms round his neck and embraced him so fervently that he was quite overcome, and as he kissed her hand and grasped mine, there were tears in his eyes.

"We mustn't stop!" I said hurriedly, feeling decidedly chokey and afraid of displaying my emotion. "One quick drink, which you must need, Arnheim, for you're soaked to the skin, and then off!" I rummaged at the back of my seat and produced a bottle of champagne to Clare's speechless amazement.

"Sakes alive, Jug! where in the name of all things did you get that?"

"I bought it in Feldkirch—er—you know, just in case!"

"*Sehr praktisch!*"

I caught Clare's eye and felt a warm surge of gratitude to whatever gods there be that I had been allowed to hear that delightfully silly remark again.

"It'll have to be a loving cup," I said, bringing out the famous folding mug.

"To your happiness," said Clare as she raised it to him.

"To your freedom," I said as I followed her.

"To a peaceful future," he said as he toasted us both, and in that solemn moment I prayed that he might be prophetic.

As soon as we moved off again Clare fired a string of questions at him.

"How did you get rid of the car? What did you do to poor Spengli?"

"Spengli? What car?" Arnheim looked puzzled.

"I can tell you," I said laughing. "Your boy friend is probably being arrested at this minute somewhere between the Rhine and Wildhaus."

"But how did he get there?" said Clare, amazed. "Surely Paul didn't hide him in the dickey?"

"What's all this?" broke in Arnheim. "I can't make head or tail of anything."

"It's quite simple," I explained. "Clare vamped the Swiss in the Buick and persuaded him to leave Feldkirch after dinner, and she firmly believes that you sandbagged him and drove over the border with a stolen car and papers leaving your victim unconscious in a convenient ditch, and as she's quite fallen for the funny little man she's rather perturbed about his fate!"

"Good gracious, what a bloodthirsty ideal!"

"But *didn't* you?"

"My dear lady, I promise you that I have hit no defenceless Swiss over the head, neither have I, alas! shoved even a member of the Gestapo into a ditch!"

"But then—I don't see—I mean—did you creep over in the dark, or what?"

"No, Madam, there was nothing so undignified about my exit from Greater Germany. I left in the most orthodox manner; by the main road, on a motor-bicycle!"

"On a motor-bike? But—but—good God! you don't mean—that was you?"

Arnheim laughed heartily. "Indeed it was!" he said. "I can't think why you didn't recognize me. I only rubbed a little dirty motor-oil on my moustache and eyebrows at the last

minute. Thank heavens I did, otherwise you would probably have given me away. I never meant you to see me, and I got the shock of my life when I found that you were still at the customs house. The car was beyond the beam of light and I didn't see it until I was right on top of you all I just had to brazen it out and hope that the officials would be too taken up with me to see what effect I was having on you!"

"I nearly passed out," I admitted, "but luckily I realized that it must be you when I heard the roar of the bike and it gave me a minute to pull myself together."

"So you got those German guards to think that Spengli was you when he was just Spengli all the time, whereas you—you—well, I'm jiggered! I thought you were a hard-bitten Nazi and a dirty one at that! Of all the superb cheek and nerve! Whatever made you think of such a thing?"

"The *Scarlet Pimpernel*, I should imagine," I said.

"What's that?"

"Haven't you read it? No? Oh well, there's a get-away something similar there, very famous."

"No, I've never read your scarlet what's-its-name, but I made a similar 'get-away' as you call it, from an Italian prisoners' camp in the last war. Dressed in an officer's uniform (yes, I *did* 'sandbag' that one!) I rushed to the guardroom at the main gate yelling that a prisoner had got out and telling the men to open and follow me. I had about thirty Italian soldiers with me when I passed through the gate, but during the 'search' I managed to lose them! If you can get people to fix their minds on one all-important idea they very rarely think of anything else and that's your one and only chance."

"You were absolutely magnificent and you gave Clare the jitters; she was as white as a sheet!"

"You were a swine not to have told me," she said.

"How could I? In the middle of it all? Besides, I was almost paralysed thinking what I ought to do. You see, the plan was that you and I should drive through and wait for Arnheim to arrive on the motor-bike at the rendezvous. If anyone inquisitive turned up I was to have a puncture. Then with that muddle at the customs and that man being such an eternity with the passports it upset the timing and he got ahead of us and I didn't

know if he'd have time to do his quick-change act or if we were to pick him up at all. I dawdled and stopped and was as slow as I dared be and when I spotted him by the crucifix, our meeting place, I pulled up ostensibly to ask him if he'd seen the Spengli car, but really to let him know we had the gendarmes on board in case he wanted to hide in the hay-barn till I could fetch him later."

"What on earth possessed you to take those men on board, Jug? I thought you'd gone stark staring mad!"

"It would have looked so queer if I hadn't. It seemed such an obvious thing to do, and I felt that they'd most likely think of it themselves and that I'd better get the kudos and dispel suspicion."

"He was quite right, Clare. As a matter of fact it was a stroke of genius. After all, I didn't risk much—it was pitch dark, and why on earth should anyone think I was anything but what I pretended to be? I speak the dialect for one thing, and for another it's always safer to travel under the wing of the police if you're a fugitive!"

"As it turned out," I remarked, "it was lucky, because the law gave us our safe-conduct through the lines at Buchs, and if they hadn't it would have been the devil and all."

"I thought of that," said Arnheim.

"So what? I forgot all about the possibility of the people at Schaanwald telephoning ahead and having the patrols out, and it gave me a fearful turn when I realized that all the roads would be blocked."

"The Swiss always do that; hence the danger of trying to sneak across—you invariably get caught by one or other of their extremely vigilant frontier guards. I had decided to bluff it out, and since they were looking for a Swiss car and a commercial traveller and not a local *Bauer*, it most likely would have worked, but your idea, Greig, of taking the gendarmes on board made it all plain sailing."

"What I want to know," said Clare, "is how you dashed off on the bike in 'N.S.K.K.'\* uniform complete with boots and helmet and reappeared about a quarter of an hour later disguised as a farmer. How did you get the clothes and the machine?"

\* National Socialist Kraftfahrer Korps

"I brought the uniform with me from Amstetten; my friend there is a doctor in the hospital and he managed to pinch the complete outfit from a patient. I changed into it at the sawmill where I hid all day and where Mr. Greig left me. The bike was under the tarpaulin all the time; Parker got it in Kitzbühel. I shoved it and the uniform into a slimy pond alongside the hayshed where my friend here had left me the change of clothes, the cape and the beard."

"Yes, and jolly tickly that beard was!" I said, smiling. "I had to push it down my shirt for fear the frontier guards would wonder what on earth I was doing with it in my rucksack."

"My only fear was," went on Arnheim, "that in the rain and the dark I shouldn't find the place in time and that I wouldn't be able to change before you arrived since I had run through you, so to speak. I never got out of anything so quickly in my life as those breeches and boots—they stuck like leeches with the wet and I nearly dragged my skin off as well—and of course I drove the bike like hell let loose; luckily I've done a good deal of track racing or I should probably have landed in a hedge!"

"How did you know when to follow us to the frontier?"

"There's a barn opposite the 'Golden Rose' (that's why I told you to go there). I hid the bike in the bushes and then sat and watched till you came. When you drove off soon after a Swiss car had passed, I knew that we were all set. Naturally I took the particulars of all cars that went by."

"Pretty tricky, if you ask me! It only wanted some little thing to go wrong to upset the entire apple-cart."

"Life's like that," replied Arnheim calmly, "and if you keep worrying about the cart you never have any apples!"

"You deserve to get away with it, if anyone does," said Clare warmly; "to plan a thing like that and carry it through the way you have done is superlative."

"No, just lucky; and for your part, without which I could never have got away at all, *you* deserve all the luck in the world!"

We drove on into the night, past the Wallensee, inky black and mysterious, to the comparatively straight stretch towards Lachen. Clare took over here and I was glad to have a rest, for the reaction after the past two days was beginning to tell. Except for my short night's sleep at the "Lion" I had not been able to

let up for forty odd hours during which time my nerves had been keyed to fever-pitch. Now, the relief of being able to relax and the exhilaration over our victorious achievement put us all in the highest of spirits and we laughed and sang as we sped along the Zurich road, each of us, I think, happier than the other. The storm had been only local and here the roads were dry and the night starry, so we were able to make good time and it was roughly half-past one when we crossed the causeway at the end of the Lake of Zurich and saw the lights of Rapperswil ahead of us.

"Will you put me down just outside the town?" Arnheim said to Clare.

"If you like, but we can easily take you to the villa."

"I think it will be wiser for me to arrive on foot, and anyway I would like to walk a little first, if I may."

I said nothing, realizing how the man must be feeling coming back to his wife as from the dead, and so at the outskirts of the town we set him down.

It was a strange farewell; on a deserted road in the middle of the night. But perhaps it was just as well that the kindly darkness hid our faces, for we all felt the emotion of the moment and when it came to the actual parting we were tongue-tied and had nothing to say.

A few minutes later Clare stopped in front of the Swan Hotel and I got out to see if they had any rooms. I was quite prepared to be told that the hotel was full as it was the height of the season, but apparently a number of guests had left that day and the night porter informed us that we could have the pick of the bedrooms. We chose two overlooking the lake and after we had unpacked our bare necessities and had got outside a glass of beer and sandwich we walked out on to the balcony and stood looking at the starlit sky and the dancing lights on the black water.

"Well, that's the happy ending to Arnheim's story," I said, slipping my arm through Clare's. "Kari will have posted the money back to Switzerland by now, so they ought to be all set."

"Yes," she agreed, "isn't it lovely to think of them together again and all that nightmare behind them? I think it would be almost worth all the awful anxiety and agony of mind to have

a reunion such as they are having, bless them! I wish we could all be sure of happy endings to our stories!"

"Well, my present concern is to see that you have a happy holiday," I said kissing her good-night. "We've made a splendid start, and with any luck we should have lots of fun in store, so I don't think we've much to grumble about, do you?"

"Indeed we haven't! And now let's go to bed, and in the morning we'll make plans I'm sure it will be a lovely day "

"Looks like it," I replied gazing at the cloudless sky "Anyway, whatever it does, it's certainly going to be a lovely day for us!"



## CHAPTER XI

*If we do meet again, why, we shall smile:  
If not, why then this parting was well made*

JULIUS CAESAR

WHEN I woke next morning it was half-past nine and the sun was streaming into my bedroom. I strolled out on to my balcony and stood looking at the sparkling water, a gloriously blue sky and the outline of the alps in the distance.

What a heavenly morning! I thought to myself, and what a heavenly spot! I stretched lazily and browsed contentedly in pleasurable anticipation of the joys the day would bring. We'll take a boat presently, I decided, and bathe from it. We might even take a picnic lunch and land on Ufenau. I wonder if I can hire a motor-boat—it'll be a bit of a sweat to row all that way. After tea we'll go over the castle. I suppose Clare knows it, but even so it's well worth several visits. I think I'll order breakfast out here and then wake her. She had a long sleep yesterday morning so she oughtn't to be tired.

I rang down for the breakfasts and clambering over the intervening barricade I called to Clare through her window.

"Hello, dear! What time is it?" she answered sleepily.

"Nearly a quarter to ten. I've ordered breakfast for us both on your balcony. Hurry up and come out; it's divine out here!"

We sat basking in the sun and I told her my plans for the day, which she agreed were first-rate. A little lake-steamer came fussing up to the pier and a small party of soldiers who had been waiting in full kit at the landing stage went on board. There was much kissing and waving between them and the party who had gathered to see them off. I looked at the scene, amused that so much fuss should be made of something so unimportant.

"They make as much to-do in this country," I said, "going on manoeuvres as any other people setting out on a major campaign!"

"Well, they've got wonderful weather for it; they're lucky."

At this moment the waiter appeared with steaming hot coffee, rolls and black cherry jam. He was a pleasant, rosy-cheeked lad with pale blue eyes and as he placed the tray between us he hesitated a moment as if he were undecided whether to speak or not, and then the words came out with a rush:

"Terrible news, sir, isn't it?"

My heart seemed to stop quite still and I grasped the arms of the basket-chair, trying to get my breath which appeared to have vanished.

"What news?" I asked in a dead level voice.

"Don't you know, sir? The German army marched into Poland this morning! It's war!" he added, his voice an odd mixture of awe and excitement.

There was an appalling silence. Then I heard myself speaking as if I were someone else.

"Could you bring us a paper?"

"Certainly, sir. Will the *Zurcher* do?"

"Anything," I replied mechanically, "anything."

He left us and Clare and I looked at each other without saying a word. In the harbour the paddle-steamer was just backing out. The small party of soldiers and the women waving frantically did not seem silly any more. A car drove round from the garage and a big fair man hurried out of the hotel and began strapping luggage on the carrier. He was followed by a woman in a white helmet such as racing motorists wear, who gave instructions to the porter where to put the suitcases. They hardly spoke and as they drove off I saw a D on the back of the car and a Munich number-plate. It turned left in the direction of St. Gallen and Bavaria.

The waiter returned with the paper and Clare read it over my shoulder.

"It's terribly sudden," she said, for want of something better to say. "From one day to another—just like that."

"You forget that we haven't seen a paper for nearly a week."

"But how is it that the Parkers didn't know?"

"There was obviously nothing in the German papers even hinting at such a thing, and don't you remember they were complaining that the *Telegraph* hadn't come? Held up, I expect."

"But there was no *sign* of war in Feldkirch yesterday. I can't make it out. People were bathing and setting off for excursions just as usual. Is it a huge bluff d'you think?"

I shook my head. "I'm afraid not; but I think it'll be a horrid surprise for the German people. They don't expect a war, Clare, I'm sure of that. They think that the Danzig question will be settled bloodlessly like every territorial gain of late. The Führer has told them over and over again that he wants *peace*, and the fools believe him! Why, I have an idea that even the troops imagine that this is just another triumphal march. And it isn't only the man-in-the-street in Germany who was certain there wasn't going to be a war, it's people who ought to know better. D'you remember von Richter? That rather pleasant man with the charming wife who had been German ambassador in Chili? Well, in Vienna only last week I spoke to him about the situation, because he seemed a level-headed unbiased sort of chap, and he just laughed in my face! 'My dear fellow,' he said, 'there isn't going to be a war! You English are filled up with these absurd ideas and get quite feverishly worked up about nothing at all. The Führer will see to it that all goes smoothly.' "

"And Danzig?" I asked him.

"*'Cela s'arrangera,'* he answered. He wasn't bluffing. It was the honest opinion of a diplomat."

"Perhaps it will 'arrange itself' in a way," said Clare, with more hope than conviction. "I mean perhaps it will be localized and not be really another war in the real sense."

"Darling, it's no use being an ostrich. The German tanks are sweeping into Poland now, at this moment! The Poles are resisting. That means war. World war!"

"Then England will come in?"

"If she doesn't," I said grimly, "then I'll stay here and get myself naturalized a Swiss!"

"What are we going to do, Jug?"

"Do? Get back to London just as soon as ever we can."

"But I can't!"

"What d'you mean you can't. Of course you can! There are no restrictions on Americans going to England—I mean you can get a visa quite easily."

"But Jug, I must go back to Conrad!"

"Go back?—Go—don't be an ass, darling, you can't possibly go back; it's an enemy country!"

"But I'm not English!"

"Rats! Look here, you were brought up in England, your mother was English and to all intents and purposes you *are* English. So don't let's hear any more about this ridiculous idea. Do you imagine for one moment that I'd let you go back?"

"You can't stop me, Jug."

"Can't I just!"

"No."

I looked at her, alarmed. There were two bright spots of colour in her cheeks and her eyes were unusually bright and hard.

"Clare," I said, a sudden icy fear creeping over me, "you don't mean that you—that you *want* to go back?"

"I'm dying to return. I'm sure Vienna will be a most delightful town in wartime!" she replied with extreme bitterness.

I was silent for a few minutes and then I said tentatively:

"I don't believe that Conrad would expect you to go back."

She looked at me thoughtfully. "No," she said, "I don't believe he would. But he's not going to be asked. It's no good, Jug, I *know* what I've got to do, and there's not the slightest sense in going against what you feel to be right. My job at the moment is to stand by Conrad and use my neutrality to help my friends—God knows they are likely to need it. If we can get away to the States, well and good; if not, then we must just take what's coming to us. If the situation were reversed Conrad would never let me down, and if I left him to his fate now, I'd be every sort of a cad. It would be just as absurd to expect you to stay comfortably put in Rapperswil as for me to tootle off unconcerned to England. I'm sunk, Jug—utterly, hopelessly sunk!"

I gazed at her, paralysed. I felt cold and rather sick. The awful reality was beginning to dawn on me. With the first shock of the news I had thought only of war, of the horror of it and of the Damoclean dread which had materialized. Now it was we two that mattered. Our lives; our tragedy. It was entirely personal, and the fact that thousands of people were experiencing just the same anguish at the threat of impending separation did not even cross my mind. It was Clare's life that was at stake;

her happiness that was being endangered; her future that was trembling. And for what? It was all so senseless, so unnecessary. One man's insatiable ambition; one man's fanatical greed for incontestable power, one man——!

"The bastard!" I muttered through my teeth, "what an unspeakable creature!" I clasped my head in my hands, biting hard on the stem of my pipe. I must keep calm, I kept telling myself; I must help her; I must get on top. As if in answer to an unspoken prayer the sudden vision of Arnheim's steady courageous eyes came to my aid. With a supreme effort I pulled myself together and managed to give Clare a feeble sort of smile. I took a gulp of coffee as my throat felt like a nutmeg-grater, and after buttering a roll with great deliberation I said in the most matter-of-fact tone that I could muster:

"Well, old lady, seein' as 'ow things is what they is, we appear o have got ourselves into a situation from which I can see no satisfactory 'daynounge' "

"You're telling me!" Her jaw was set but her eyes were soft and I knew that at least there was no danger of a misunderstanding.

"The first thing we'd better do," I continued briskly, "is to go into Zürich and see the British Consul and find out about trains and things."

"I could leave from there," she said.

I swallowed quickly. "Of course—if you like; it would be more comfortable too—to travel on a fast train." The word "leave" stuck in my throat. "But listen, dear, an hour or two one way or another can't make any difference, so let's go and have a bathe before we do anything else. I think it'll do us good; there's nothing like swimming when you're in a flap."

"All right; might as well!" She was relieved, I think, to be able to take some definite action, and in a few minutes we were down at the bathing establishment on the lake.

Clare stood a moment silhouetted against the sky on the upper diving board, a brown lissom figure in a thick white Jantzen and a white helmet, and then with a most graceful and precise "jack-knife" she entered the water almost without a splash. I watched her wet bronzed arms cutting the water with superb strength and ease while her little feet churned up a small wake as they

beat out the rhythm of her crawl. I watched every movement fascinated, printing each of them indelibly on my memory. "Dear God," I cried in mute supplication, "let me live to see her do that again! It's such a joy to watch her—such a joy!" And then my words to her in the Griesenau valley came back to me and I remembered saying that we lost so many precious moments with the fear of parting. Dammit! I thought, I won't waste these! I'll make every one of them last for ever. A running swallow-dive and I was after her, threshing through the blue waters of the Zurichsee, splashing, spluttering, laughing, as if there were nothing in the world to do except to race her to the raft.

The first set-back to our morning's plans was when we found that all petrol pumps in Switzerland were closed for three days during general mobilization. Fortunately the tank of the Ford was three-quarters full and I had spare cans on board, enough to take me into France, but not enough to do the extra run to Zürich and back. So we decided to go by steamer and accordingly boarded the next express paddle-boat which landed us in the commercial capital soon after lunch.

I shall never forget that lake trip nor the sight of the city as we approached it. Along the banks for a considerable distance stretched the imposing buildings of the "Landi," the great Exhibition. Flags and banners of every description made gay patches of colour, the garden restaurants were full to overflowing and the music of their orchestras floated across the water. Boats and launches were tied up along the landing-stages, miniature electric trolleys moved fussily between the pedestrians conveying the footsore from one pavilion to another, and overhead the bright red cars of the cable ferry took passengers to and fro across the lake. Everything in sight proclaimed peace and prosperity, gaiety and entertainment, art and progress. It seemed hard to realize that a few hundred miles away flourishing cities such as this were probably already flattened into smoking ruins, with the only music that of the guns, and the only quiet that of the grave. And yet the dark shadow had already begun to creep across our path, for both Clare and I felt that the gay scene before us was an illusion, a mirage, which would melt away like all dreams and leave as stark reality, not the white

halls and multi-coloured pennants, not the fairy lights and pyrotechnics, not the circus and the sway-boats but only the utter desolation and despair of total war.

The crowd at the British Consulate was so great that we did not even attempt to enter the building. "No wonder the hotel was empty last night," I said, "I thought at the time that it was funny!" We went instead straight to the railway station to enquire about trains. Here, at least, we got an answer, and it was both short and to the point. There were no through trains running anywhere, and no civilians were allowed to travel in the direction of the frontiers.

"Well, that settles that!" I said, "and now where do we go for jam?" I asked whether anyone knew if trains were running in Germany. No fast trains, we were told, but up till that morning it appeared that two goods trains a day had left Buchs for Innsbruck with one passenger coach attached. The official could not say whether they were still running but he suggested that we might be able to hire a car to take us there to see, or else we could wait till the mobilization was over.

We thanked the man and went to a big garage near-by where luckily the proprietor knew me.

"Yes," he said, "I've enough petrol to take you to Buchs but I've only got one man to drive you, and he's due with his regiment on the St. Gotthard at dawn to-morrow!"

I suggested that I might drive the car, but it seemed that he was not insured for the drive-yourself system and that it could not be arranged.

"Well, can't your man take us this evening?" I asked. "He'd still have time to make the St. Gotthard."

After a long consultation and a twenty-francs tip the young man in question agreed to take us.

"But we must start right away," he said, "it's after four o'clock now."

We picked up Clare's bags from the waiting room of the boat-stage where we had deposited them and were soon driving back again along the lakeside.

"There's going to be another storm," said Clare, "it feels very hot and thundery."

"I wish to heavens it *would* rain," I answered, "this oppres-

sive air always gives me the most awful head and makes me nervy."

I had my wish, but it was more than I had bargained for. The storm of the previous evening was a mere shower compared to the deluge to which we were now subjected, and when we were passing the Wallensee it became so heavy that the driver was obliged to pull up. The side screens and the canvas hood were not proof against such a terrific downpour and soon the water was dripping in all over us till we were thoroughly wet. We sat huddled in the back of the car, damp and chilly and too utterly miserable to speak. Clare's head was on my shoulder and her hand tightly clasped in mine and we clung to each other like two forlorn children.

Only last night, I kept saying to myself, we were driving along this very same road singing for sheer happiness and now we're so desperate that we can't even speak to each other! There was, I felt, so much to be said; we had so little time left; but somehow the words wouldn't come and the miles and the time kept flying by at an agonizing speed. The evening train was due to leave about seven-thirty the man had said. I didn't dare look at my watch, but I heard a clock chime six. An hour and a half—My numbed brain seemed capable of no other thought. In an hour and a half she'll have gone—gone—d'you understand?—gone! Don't think of it! I tried to tell myself. She's here, now, beside you—concentrate on that, and that only! But it was no use. Fascinated like a rabbit in a boa-constrictor's cage, my mind was on the clock. One hour—three quarters of an hour—now we were passing Sargans—now we were passing the place where Clare had discovered that Arnheim was in the car with us. O God! I thought, it isn't true! This is all a ghastly dream. I shall wake up in a minute and find that it's all right. It can't be true! She isn't really going—my little Clare, not really. Half an hour—

Clare was shivering and she held on to me closer than ever.

"Cold, darling?" The words were forced out with difficulty. She had none for a reply. I could feel her body so tense that the muscles of her arms were taut and I could see her face white under the sunburn. She was breathing very quickly and now



and again she passed her tongue over her lips as if they were dry.

It was seven-fifteen as we turned into Buchs and about three minutes later we drew up at the station.

I sprang out of the car as fast as my stiff limbs would allow. The driver was soaked to the skin and was squeezing the water out of his coat sleeve.

"Wait here till I find out about the train," I said, and hurried into the booking office. In a few minutes I was back again, walking slowly.

"It's gone! Went ten minutes ago. The station-master says there should be another at midday to-morrow but that it'll probably be the last."

Clare looked at me as if she didn't understand and then she gave a little gasp and burst into tears.

The driver was most concerned and evidently thought that she was crying because she had missed the train, which under the circumstances was a normal conclusion. "I'm so sorry," he said, "but I really couldn't drive any faster, it wouldn't have been safe. I did my best."

I told him not to worry and that on the contrary we were thankful that the train had gone. He looked at us curiously and then as if the truth of the situation had dawned on him he shook his head sympathetically and murmured that the war was a bad business.

"Will you drive us to the hotel?" I asked, "and then you'd better push off. I don't envy you going up the St. Gotthard on a night like this."

"That's nothing," he replied cheerfully. "I'm the colonel's driver and we go anywhere in any weather. But how will you get back, sir?"

"I'll find a freight train or something, or maybe even an ordinary service going away from the frontier. Don't bother about me, I'll manage all right."

We parted at the hotel and Clare and I were thankful to get out of our wet things and have a hot bath. The manager lent me a shirt and a pair of shorts while mine were drying in the kitchen and soon we were ensconced in the little dining-room tossing down Schnapps to keep away chills.

I had been half afraid of the result of this delay on our already over-stretched nerves and wondered whether the long-drawn-out agony of waiting for the parting would be almost more than we could endure, but one look at Clare's face as she came into the room told me that for the moment, at any rate, all was well.

"Oh, Jug!" she said as she tackled a *Schnitzl* with more appetite than I would have thought possible, "I shall never in my life be more thankful for anything than for this respite. I needed this break; I needed the time to steady myself, quietly, with you. It's all been so sudden and such a frightful shock that it had quite shattered me and I haven't had time to pull myself together. I was terrified as we turned into the station yard that I was going to crack, and I couldn't have borne to have had to leave you like that. Thank God, dear, that we have this little time together—it makes all the difference, and I'm so, so grateful!"

By the middle of dinner I was beginning to see that she was right. I felt suddenly soothed and tranquil. To-morrow was still to-morrow, and to-day was another day, and meanwhile the colour had returned to Clare's cheeks and the warmth of the room and its utter banality were comforting.

A little waitress with a merry impudent face and sparkling black eyes came and stood at our table. She knew something about us, perhaps from the chauffeur who had stopped to have a sandwich and a glass of beer, and doubtless from the proprietor, who had instructed her to find out about the train for Clare next morning. Anyway she proceeded to tell us one funny story after another, evidently with the idea of cheering us up and distracting us from our sorrows, and as she had an immense fund of anecdotes and a most amusing way of recounting them she succeeded, and we were soon telling her some in return. I was grateful to the girl for her silly chatter which did much to ease the tension, and I was touched by the thought which had prompted it and which obviously sprang from no desire for familiarity but from real kindness of heart.

So after all our last evening together was a cheerful one; thoroughly *gemütlich* in fact, and when at last Clare said good-night to me I felt that a new courage had been granted us with which to face the ordeal ahead.

September 2nd dawned bright and sunny and though the realization of what that day was to bring forced itself on my first conscious thoughts, I was thankful to feel in myself and to observe in Clare, perfectly calm and steady nerves. We spent most of the morning making practical plans for getting news of each other via various friends in different countries, and I made Clare promise faithfully that if anything happened to Conrad or if things became in any way dangerous or impossible for her, she would go back to the States. The knowledge that this back-door remained open to her was an immense relief to me and it gave us both the impression that our mutual link with the New World kept us still united even if in a very far-off way.

At twelve o'clock we strolled slowly down to the station. The train was due to leave at a quarter past. Now that the moment had come we rose to meet it with perfect self-possession. An atmosphere of fatalistic serenity closed in on us like a pain-stilling anaesthetic and we walked on to the platform like people in a dream. Only when she held her face up to kiss me good-bye did the numbness subside suddenly, leaving me with a sharp agonizing feeling of intense physical pain. Clare was smiling at me with the saddest eyes I had ever seen, as if she couldn't bear to take them off my face.

"Take care of yourself, Mrs. Muggins," was all I said.

"Come back safely," was all she answered.

And then I was gone, stumbling out of the station like a blind man. I could hear the guard's whistle, the puff-puff of the engine (they had disconnected the electricity and were running on coal) and the creak of the wheels as they started turning.

I reached the level crossing just as the first trucks were going over it and clung to the road-bar like a drowning man to a spar. It was the same striped bar that the patrol had raised to let us out of Liechtenstein thirty-six hours before. The passenger coach was at the end of the train and though I hung there watching I almost hoped that I would not see her. But there she was, leaning out of the window, her little red hat set jauntily on her head and the red roses I had given her pinned to her neat brown suit. Her eyes were bright, but not with tears, and the kiss that she blew was as gay as that of a schoolgirl off on a holiday. I waved back wildly, my feeling of pride in her eclipsing all others,

and it was only when I found my hand at my forehead that I realized that I had given her my famous half-salute which she used to say was quite my own.

I stood very still at the barrier listening to the sound of the train. "Chug-chug," it said, "she's gone! Chug-chug, chug-chug, she's gone, she's gone!"

My head began to throb abominably, my hands were clammy, and I wondered if I were going to be sick. God! I thought, I didn't know it would be quite as bad as this. I didn't know one felt ill with it. This is much worse than physical pain.

The train was gathering speed and though the sound was getting fainter in the distance I could still hear it distinctly in the clear mountain air. The rhythm had quickened now, and I felt it beating in my head, drumming like hammer-blows on my brain. *Chug-chug-chug, chug-chug-chug*, went the train. *Must-have-faith, must-have-faith*, answered my mind. And then as the words took shape I saw Conrad's face before me and I heard again his soft, firm voice speaking with the same compelling insistence as it had spoken to me before: "Whatever happens, Jeremy, you *must* have faith, you *must*!"

I drew a deep breath, let go the barrier, and stood up—.

A few yards away a German customs officer was patrolling the line. I looked at him in a detached sort of way and reflected that the two sets of rails between us were hardly representative of the distance which separated us. I gazed at his bottle-green uniform and found that my brain for some curious reason seemed to be focussed on it.

I wonder, I thought with apparent irrelevancy, if I can get back into the Rifle Brigade? Do they take one at forty-five? Well, I can always lie about my age, and Johnson will always give me a chit. I suppose he'll command a battalion now. It's lucky I haven't got fat! I'm sure I can get into my old tunic. Perhaps they'll be a different shape this war—I wonder what I did with my cap badge? I hope I didn't take it with my things to India. I'm fond of that badge. It was with my uncle at Lady-smith and it saw me through the last show. Must be lucky! By jove! it'll be good to see that badge again! I wonder if I could

get back into the 13th—well of course if I could do that it would be simply grand——.

And so my thoughts rambled on as I turned my back on the Austrian Alps and set my face towards the West. The West—from whence help, however long it may be on the way, eventually always comes to oppressed countries.











**AIDE-de-CAMP'S LIBRARY**

---

*Accn. No.*.....705.....

1. Books may be retained for a period not exceeding fifteen days.